

**Rising Heat
in
Tehran**

Don Petty

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Cover Design and layout: Betty (J.C.) Choate

Order from:

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P.O. Box 72

Winona, MS 38967

Phone: 662-283-1192

E-Mail: choate@WorldEvangelism.org

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Preface

While **Rising Heat in Tehran** is of necessity a story about a man who developed into a missionary, it is mostly about the mission of the man and his family and about the countries to which they carried the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The man himself quickly fades from significance in the story, and the spreading of God's word in two hard Islamic countries becomes the central thrust of the story.

Only the uniqueness of the qualifying of individuals to preach the gospel, makes any concentration on the man consequential in the story at all. The point is made, however, that God can, does, and will, take people who believe and trust in His power, and make useful vessels out of them. It doesn't matter if the man meets the requirements of any formal school or program; it does matter that he be receptive to God's guidance.

God can take the weakest, the least capable, the poorest qualified people and get the job done that He wants done. He hears the weakest sincere call for truth from anyone anywhere in the world and arranges for that one faint cry to be heard and answered with the hearing of the gospel. The poor, the weak, the disenfranchised member may well be the vessel God chooses to get the word to the sincere, receptive one crying out for the truth of God's will and word. A weak vessel may be called on to take the gospel to answer that weak plea for truth in some remote place of the world.

The writer of this book has indeed been one of those vessels that seemed 'broken,' and God picked him up, put him together, and placed him on the soil of Islamic countries, where small quiet voices were crying out for God. The power of the gospel was at work, and perhaps because God heard them and responded with one of His weakest vessels, to give them the hope of eternal life.

The preparation needed for God to use His people is primarily sincerity of belief, openness to be used, willingness to break with the secular world, trust in Him and His power to care and protect, bending to His will, and a portion of spiritual naiveté. Perhaps some or all of that came into play in the work done to spread the word in Lahore and in Tehran.

It is the firm belief of this writer that some from Pakistan and Iran will live forever because of the working of God through one of His weakest servants. That is the prayer at least, and in that same mode of prayer this book is made available for those who may contemplate work in the mission field.

Don Petty

Publisher's Statement

Having worked with Don and Sylvia in Pakistan, we continued to keep contact with them after their return to the States and to share in spiritual work in numerous ways. We were saddened when Don left this world at an earlier age than would have been expected, but we are thankful that Sylvia has carried through with his desire to tell their story of life in Iran through the pages of this book.

What began as an opportunity to bring the Gospel to a “secular” Muslim population turned into the explosion of the return of the Ayatollah Khomeini and his promotion of Shia Islam on its march to rule the world. **Rising Heat in Tehran** builds the background for what is still unfolding on the world scene today. It is a story very well written and extremely interesting because it has grown to have an impact on all our lives.

Betty (J.C.) Choate

October 15, 2016

Dedicated to all, past and present, who passionately pursue Christ's command to go into all the world according to ---

--- Matthew 28:18-20



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Introduction

“IT IS COMING APART! IT’S TIME TO GET OUT!”

Those words haunted us most of the time we lived in the Muslim world.

Tehran is a tinderbox now and has been for decades. It was fortunate circumstances that allowed my family and me to live there in the interval of time when the Shah was in power, then was dethroned. From 1974 to 1979, my work in three jobs kept us in that huge city.



First, I worked in our church mission teaching Americans and Iranians the Bible, and trying to establish a permanent church for both. Heart-wrenching things befell our members. Some of our meeting places were shut down.

Second, I taught mathematics in the Tehran American School, which provided an education for both American and Iranian children, with Iranian soldiers patrolling the grounds every hour the school was in session.

Third, I worked as a chemist in the laboratories of Bell Helicopter International, teaching Iranians to analyze oils of helicopters of the military and of the Shah. At the entrance of our facilities heavy American tanks kept their major guns pointed directly at the gates.

From these three positions my ‘3 dimensional’ observations of “Persian” fanatical thought have led to mixed dichotomous – even tri-chotomous – perceptions of the people in the embrace of Islam. Three extreme Persian personalities stand out, (1) the last Shahanshah of Iran; (2) the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, to whom I attribute the planting of the seeds of hate of the “Great Satan,” America, which inspired Osama bin Laden to his hate and actions against the West; and (3) the current president of Iran, Ahmadinejad, who speaks out in public wild assertions to divert world attention from the things he is doing in his country, growing his nuclear power and training more Al Qaeda terrorists. An option in these times, is that he is hiding the very serious facts in rapidly develop-

ing small nuclear bombs in massive numbers to launch all over the West, specifically aimed at the United States and Israel.

Two Americans stand out in those days, Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. Both of these presidents were affected by the taking of 53 American hostages by Iranian zealots in October 1979 when President Carter was in the White House. They were released right after President Reagan entered the White House, revealing more of the very interesting nature of the Muslim extremists.

The events during September 11, 2001, and for many years following sparked further interest in Tehran and the development of people who found a 'jihadist calling' during the days following the dethroning of the Shah by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. It follows that the voice of the Ayatollah caused a great fire in the hearts of many Muslims across the world, and many of the fanatical followers of Islam developed terrorist organizations with a fervor never before witnessed by the West or any other nation of the world.

This story is aptly named "RISING HEAT IN TEHRAN" for a number of reasons. During the summers, temperatures in that intense and ruthless Iranian desert south of Tehran, in the home territory of the Ayatollah Khomeini, reach near unbearable heat at 130 degrees and higher. Additionally, the Iranian Revolution reached a boiling point and grew ever more dangerous as my work in the laboratories of Bell Helicopter International kept me in close touch with 'everyday' Iranians, to whom I was giving technical training. Thirdly, the hearts and passions of the Iranian populace was heated by the scorching words of the Ayatollah sitting in France, but addressing the Iranians all across Iran using tape cassettes which were heard during Friday prayers in mosques by millions of men ready for change and willing to act violently to bring it about.

There was a natural fire of liberty in some of those hearts, burning to be able to express themselves, as they wanted.

My story is intended to explain the essence of the true character of the people of that land, their goodness and hospitality, their badness of natural personality in a hard land, and their ugliness as it relates to the "infidel", the non-Muslim. Theirs is a multi layered national personality, made up often of wonderful and beautiful individuals.

The land of Persia, the ancient name which represented intrigue to us in the West, extends from warm seaports (valuable economically and militarily) in the south, across hot deserts, over high mountains on the latitudes just north of Tehran and indeed virtually surrounding the flat deserts

of central Iran, and on into dense jungle around the south coast lines of the sturgeon-filled Caspian Sea, with the huge caviar industry it provided.

Historically important nations border Iran. To the east lie Afghanistan and Pakistan (Muslim strongholds). To the north is Russia broken into two common border areas with Iran by the huge Caspian Sea. The Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf have coasts all the way across the southern boundary of Iran.

The extreme northern border of Iran connects with a juncture of Iraq and Turkey. From the point where the three countries join it is approximately 150 miles to Syria. It is very likely that troops, insurgents, Al Qaeda, and even large WMDs or equipment and materials to produce WMDs were trucked between Syria and Iran. They still could be freighted back (or forth) across that remote border.

This extremely oil-rich country allures many nations for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is its militarily strategic location in the Middle Eastern area. This precise location makes Iran especially inviting to Russia because it represents a direct route to the sea leading into the Indian Ocean. Naval bases on the coast of Iran would make it possible for Russia to command the seas in that region. They have been eyed a long time by that former and potential super power, as global conquest remains warm in the hearts of many Russian leaders.

Tinder Box? Yes, and capable of igniting for a lot of reasons. It is this writer's prayer, wish, and hope that the fuse is never lit. Iran can offer a lot of good to the world, and it can wreak a lot of havoc on the world.

My first desire is that Iran and America can build a peace relationship and save the possible 'explosion' that can rock the Middle East, yea, the entire world. In my opinion, the Iranians are capable of building nuclear weapons; and I believe they diligently are doing so, secretly underground. Further, it is logical I think and highly likely that much of the equipment to build WMDs in Iraq was carried to Iran and hidden just after 9/11 (2001) as soon as it became obvious that the American president was going to massively retaliate in Afghanistan and Iraq.

It is then probable that Iranian scientists and military engineers took over this equipment and added it to their own inventories to use in constructing the same type weapons Saddam Hussein used on his people.

This would be reminiscent of Iraq scurrying to get many of their military planes to Iran in the 1991 Gulf War, only to learn Iran would not return them, but would claim them for their own, exploiting their right of possession. This would be very much in keeping with the Iranian mental-

ity. They seize any and every advantage and maximize it for their gain, as ‘fairness’ is not a common trait of the character of an Iranian.

My story will unfold in these incisive pages starting with a good and noble intention from pre-college days to “take Jesus Christ to the Muslims,” and having that originally-naïve view evolve to one of confessed surprising disappointment and dismay. A pragmatic view emerged quickly on the “mission field” when one teen-age Muslim convert returned to her husband to be brutally killed for becoming a Christian. This was of course a set-back and caused my reconsideration of my task among “these fanatical people”. Re-evaluating my approach, I became more covert in my work, yet I had a great commission behind me. When Jesus said, “***Go into the world and teach every creature,***” that really meant me! And I would persist in that mission.

My reality was, however, that my teaching caused the death of a tender woman. Would there be more, like her, lose their life when I influenced them? Had this violent method of Islam caused my defeat early on in my plan to establish a church in an Islamic nation?

I felt persistent and even stubborn, determined and passionate ... but was I right and faithfully committed and properly motivated? I pacified my unease and questioning by trusting God and believing that He would take the young girl and give her a heavenly home and peace for eternity for confessing her faith and accepting Jesus Christ. With that, though, I went on with my work, and slowly got deeper into the minds and lives of the Iranian people.

Although the story I tell winds up in the intensity of the arrogance, and pride, and ego, and hot passion of the Iranians, it begins with the warmth of the Pakistanis, a different kind of Muslim people. The background for my belief in missions, early compassion for the Muslims, and confidence in myself to carry out my task comes about from the training of a good home, a tough and passionate girlfriend, and an active church in my boyhood in Fort Worth, Texas.

My hope for you as you read this story filled with fire and danger, disappointments and victories, is that you enjoy it with deep feeling, as we did living it. The balancing act of a man educated as a chemist, and one with a somewhat self-taught understanding of the scriptures, creates a puzzling array of dreams and goals, with visions often stepping out of a practical world and into one that would oft-times appear to be unreality. The twofold purpose for this story is built on my career in science and my desire to reach lost people with a saving message from the Creator. These

two paths converge and diverge all through my life, forming a checkerboard of adventure that goes on until this day.

These two loves of my living command most of my waking hours, with some time given to writing, music, photography, and comedy. All these things are intertwined in my family and the Church of Christ.

My son and three daughters with their ten children form the nuclear family of Sylvia's and my 'production' since 1956. However, the part of our life story as told in this book involves strains of learning and understanding and perceptions that have their 'loose ends' extending into this very perilous time.

Each chapter here has its own character like a current of a unique charge of electricity. The story is lived so mundanely that its ramifications in the world are almost missed, while the impacts of the steps leading to the ultimate conclusions are meaningful to the scientific mind, as well as to the spiritual, religious mind.

Without a radio microphone, TV camera, journalist's computer, or author's pen, the myriads of mini-stories bring this whole story, slowly and grudgingly, into being.

The thoughts in the mind of an eighteen-year-old would-be scientist and missionary launch this narrative that is lasting more than 50 years and is still very much alive and ongoing. It is not so much the story of that man or his family, as it is about a people of Islam, the people of Tehran – what they can do *for* the world or *to* the world.

Tehran is one critical place. It cannot be treated lightly, yet it must be addressed, and soon, very soon.

Chapter One

A Scientist Learns the Bible

At 12, I became a scientist. My parents bought me a chemistry set for Christmas. I worked in my ‘laboratory’ in my room, ‘doing’ and not so much ‘reading’ HOW to do. The instructions in the booklet that came with the set slowed down my learning; I wanted to see what happened as I mixed those chemicals.

Oh, sometimes I read the manual to try to understand WHAT I had done; but it was not as interesting to read how to make reactions occur, as it was to make them and try later to figure out what caused them.

That method of experimentation followed me through my life. In the 1970s, while working as a principal research scientist at the R & D laboratories of Frito-Lay, Inc. in Irving, Texas, I used the same approach in my product development of work. The method sometimes led to the chagrin of my superiors...and they often told me so.

I was assigned the project of developing a tortilla chip that would be appealing to women, which segment of the market we were mainly missing with the highly successful Nacho Doritos tortilla chips.

Always I set up an experimental run early on in a project to uncover the ‘problem’ areas. This did create some waste, but it also gave me a lot of information I could not get trying to “theorize” what was going to happen. At any rate, within a few months and on schedule, my section working under good managers, developed what has become a tremendous moneymaker and female consumer-pleaser, the tortilla chip brand, Tostitos! It was my good fortune to get that assignment and have the personnel, the resources, the facilities, and the management to complete it successfully.

In the meantime, my study and understanding of the Bible continued. My self-study had gone on from my teenage days, when my mother and father gave me a little pocket New Testament. I read that little thing over and over, finding especially interesting the very first book, Matthew.

Chapter six, verse 33, quickly became and remains, my favorite, **“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things (physical needs) will be added unto you.”** That is the “north star” of my life.

The study of that holy book challenges me even now, over 60 years after receiving that first little New Testament. I got some instructions

from a preacher in a church in Fort Worth, but I was not much of an auditory learner, preferring to see and especially to DO, in order to learn. I suppose that made me a kinesthetic learner, but whatever, I like to draw my own conclusions. That sometimes carries consequences, for which some were paid in the years of the time period, 1965 to the present.

That ‘kinesthetic’ learning tendency was evident the year Sylvia and I married in 1956. I worked as a draftsman for 2 years between the years of high school (Paschal High in Fort Worth) and college (East Texas State, now Texas A & M – Commerce).

My drafting job was at a firm named F. E. Woodruff Consulting Engineers near University and 7th Streets in Fort Worth. At lunch every day, I sat in my car eating potted meat sandwiches, 2 or 3 of them; my wife made me each morning with a chocolate cup cake for my sack lunch. As I ate, I read stories of the Bible from Hurlburt’s Bible Story Book. I read it through, starting with Genesis. I found the creation stories most intriguing. During those lunch hours I got an understanding of God and the way He dealt with mankind far more than anything I had ever gotten from hearing sermons.

Now, Bible classes on Sunday mornings were different. I recalled the days in classes as a teenager, especially after Sylvia began attending my class when I was 14 years old. She somehow had brightened up those class periods, and she caused me to study more to avoid looking dumb when I was asked a question. But my own personal Bible study in my car, even though I read from a children’s storybook, caused me to have a deeper interest in God and His ways and His people. I felt He was something personal to me now.

After Sylvia married me at barely 17 years of age and against her father’s will and judgment, she inspired me, a man of 18 years, to study the Bible. For a while, I worked on the second shift and arrived home after midnight. As soon as I showered (and sometime...well, OFTEN, romanced her a little...well, a LOT) we would open B.W. Johnson’s commentaries with our Bibles and study the missionary journeys of Paul in Acts, while we were most often sitting in the middle of our bed.

We were developing, unknown to us at the time, a mission-positive attitude, and we grew in love for His word and in love for each other, as well as in understanding of real Christianity, which we would actively practice, both of us having to DO in order to completely understand.

Our love did grow; and our first child, a boy, was born 10 months after we were married. Realizing how important an education was going to be with a family now beginning to take shape, we responded positively

to Sylvia's dad's invitation to move to Sulphur Springs, Texas, and let her parents help us with work and baby care, while I went to school.

My bachelor's degree came in 2 years and 9 months. I had majored in chemistry with enough math courses for a double major, and enough course work for minors in physics and biology.

During those college days we both worked hard. Sylvia wanted to stay home with Don Jr., but she toughed it out until her pregnancy with our second child, a girl, forced her to quit work. She gleefully accepted the change; she did not want to work away from home and her baby.

My hours were spent those college days studying science, going to class, working at Super Handy convenience store on Main Street in Sulphur Springs, teaching Bible to junior high kids at church, and studying many books on harmonizing science and scripture, setting my framework of faith and doctrine of religion.

These days completed my philosophy for life. I always had a strong faith in God. Now I had scriptures and laws of science I could blend that made my trust in 'Him above' stronger than ever. I was educated for the life ahead of us.

Diana was born and I graduated in the spring of 1960. We moved to Lake Jackson, Texas, where I took a job as a chemist at Dow Chemical Company. We attended church at a fundamental and conservative fellowship of Christians who were mission-minded and evangelism-oriented, though they were not of the 'ultra-conservative' fellowship, widely prevalent in those days.

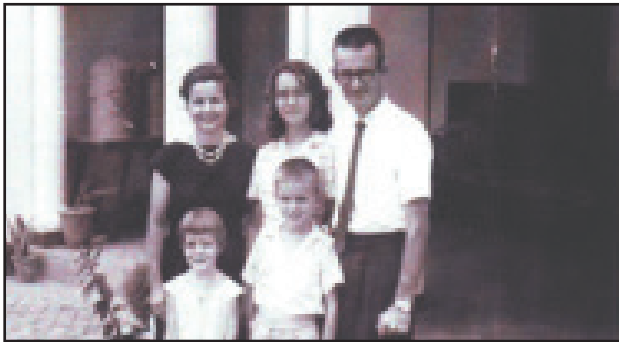
My work at Dow furnished good financial rewards, but was not totally satisfying. The church fulfilled our needs for our lives as we grew spiritually. We learned to teach in homes of people wanting to know about Christ. We had a training workshop to learn methods to use to teach people how to be saved, and we did it.

I baptized a young man when I was about 25 years old, and I liked that feeling. Our preacher, Stanley Shipp, became a missionary to Switzerland during those days. This made mission work a very real prospect, and it happened close to home, as the preacher was a good friend.

I was a member of our mission committee, when Sylvia and I were asked to make a mission trip with another couple, Bill and Jerry Wilson, to Saltillo, Mexico. We did go, and when we came back a fire had been lit in all of our hearts. We all wanted to go teach Christ in a foreign land. We began to think and pray over our plans.

We were to learn about a work of the Gordon Hogan family in Lahore, West Pakistan. Admittedly my knowledge of Pakistan was skimpy, but Sylvia had studied about the split of Pakistan from India and forming two nations, West Pakistan to the west of India and East Pakistan to the east of India.

The first American Church of Christ missionaries had entered West Pakistan a few years earlier, but we knew little of their work. We would learn about a pioneer family in Lahore, Pakistan, the Gordon Hogans. Soon we would know the gripping story of adventure this family had of getting to Lahore, of getting in Pakistan, and of getting to the task of church planting there.



Pioneer Missionaries in Pakistan, the Gordon Hogan Family:
Jane, Beth, Gordon, Julie, Dave



The Lahore Church of Christ Building
and Home of the Missionary Family.
Hogans lived on the left side of the building;
the church met on the right.

Chapter Two

First Pakistan, Later Iran

About the time of our mission trip to Mexico a lectureship on missions was planned at Abilene Christian University (ACC in the early 1960s). I attended that lectureship, and a bishop (an elder as we normally call them) spoke about the need for a missionary in Pakistan. In those days it was West Pakistan and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). He specifically talked about Lahore in the north. He said, “The money is available; we need a strong family to send.”

Immediately after he came down from the speaker’s stand I confronted him and told him I was interested in going to the mission field. We talked awhile, and although, he was dubious about my lack of formal “religious education,” he told me he would talk with his colleagues in the complete eldership at the church in Florida, which sponsored the work in Lahore.

If we were selected for Lahore, we would replace a veteran missionary family there, Gordon and Jane Hogan. We felt strongly about it, as a junior high school friend and I had talked of being a “mission team” somewhere in the world, “maybe Arabia.” My best friend, Herbert Phillips and his wife, Ethel, did wind up going to East Africa to do their mission work, but we did not get to go to Pakistan together as a team.

It did turn out that the church in Florida decided to send and support us in Lahore. After many months of work to get a visa for entry as missionaries we departed New York via the old 29,000 ton SS Statendam bound for Southampton, England, as the first leg of our journey en route for the Middle East. Our small family would work alone in the second largest city of West Pakistan. Only Karachi on the south coast was larger.

We had had our third child, Elisabeth, in the winter of 1961. She came in a bit milder than did Hurricane Carla, which hit the South Texas coast just before “Beth” came to live with us. She was tiny, but soon became an equal.

The five of us sailed out past the Statue of Liberty on April 30, 1965, heading for a new adventure, on our own, doing our work, answering our challenge inspired by God and the only understanding we had of His word.

Our trip was to carry us across Europe, Jordan, Israel, and Egypt and on to our future home among the Sunni Muslims in a land that was only 18 years old but with centuries of history when it was known as India.

Pakistan, “land of the pure,” was taken from India in 1947 in the separation of the Hindus and Muslims of India. West Pakistan and East Pakistan were originally formed as a single nation apart from but divided by India.

Since this was our first ever trip on an ocean liner, we were thankful that the ocean was merciful, as we had no rough seas during the entire eight-day voyage. Our trip was relaxing, and after reaching England we rode a train to London. We were able to visit the missionary family there, and later stayed with friends in several countries of Europe and even in the middle east, as we made the three-week sojourn to our assignment.

Our travel to Pakistan had been arranged by Enzor Travel Agency in Virginia to allow us to make a slow ‘transition’ journey and see other mission works along the way. Friends took us to see some of the important sites in Europe. The same was true for the Middle East.

I had my first real encounter with the Muslims in Amman, Jordan, where one impulsive and violent nature was displayed. When a man slugged me for raising my Argus C3 camera to take a picture of his family outside their small, one room home on the side of the road out of Amman on the way to Jerusalem, we quickly got back into our taxi and headed south. He was intending to hit me in the face, it seemed, but I ducked away, and he only hit my shoulder. It was my welcome to the Islamic mentality.

These potentially explosive peoples were at only a low state of conflict with each other, making it possible for us to see both the Jewish sectors and the Palestinian sectors of what is termed the ‘Bible lands.’ This was in May of 1965. Little did we know that in 2 years they would be in hot military battles for six days.

Israel prevailed in that war and captured territory surrounding their tiny country that to this year was held and occupied by Israelis. The people of Israel felt they needed that land as negotiating tools and for “survival buffers”, keeping the Muslims at a little more distance. The fighting of the summer of 2006 seemed to prove that their assumptions were correct. Only in August 2006, did a somewhat tenuous peace settlement slow down the bombardments between the Jews and the Muslims.

After seeing much of the Bible lands and sites of Israel, and standing in places where our Lord must have stood, we flew to Cairo, where we were met in the airport by a breathtakingly beautiful Egyptian Christian woman named Semira, who immediately whisked us out to a waiting taxi, explaining, “To wander long in a crowd is to invite trouble.” Although we

did not grasp the implication of that comment then, we would later.

Anti-American sentiment is always high in Muslim lands, although it is not generally displayed in action. It only takes a spark to ignite fervor of hate residing inside the volatile hearts of these highly emotional people.

When we had met the missionary family in Cairo, seen the Cairo museum, and made the traditional camel ride near the pyramids and Sphinx, we settled in to talk about Islam around the dinner table of our host, Bob Douglas. He had taught Bible in the Middle East Bible College in Beirut, but had been given a notice to depart Lebanon within a week or be arrested for the work he was doing, that is teaching a non-Islamic religion. He virtually made his “escape” and re-settled in Egypt, where he and his family lived a much lower profile life.

In most Muslim countries Christianity is strictly controlled and even publicly restricted entirely. One cannot display religious signs on their facilities, carry a Bible in sight in public, advertise in any way, or approach a citizen so as to convert him or even discuss Christianity. Doing any of those things meant immediate deportation if certain officials learned it was done.

It means worse things than deportation if a more fanatical person or group happens to see it occurring. In some cases it can only be ‘thought’ to be happening and trouble can arise. We were to later learn that it is much harder on Muslim converts to Christianity than it is for foreign residents.

Having learned what we could from the missionary in Egypt, as we had done all along the way, we made a long, very comfortable flight by B.O.A.C. to Karachi, Pakistan, and into the waiting presence of long-term missionaries J.C. and Betty Choate. These were tough people, solid in their faith and determined in their mission to teach men to preach Christ in Pakistan. J.C. wondered how I got a visa to enter Pakistan “to teach Bible” in the first place, since six other applications had been denied within a time span of the last two years. My only answer was that my background in industry must have been looked on more favorably than did the history of all the others in the ministry. We could not be sure why I was allowed to enter.

The J. C. Choate family was working diligently in Karachi, Pakistan, when we arrived on the mission field in May, 1965. They had been there since 1961 and had several groups of Christians meeting in and around Karachi. The family worked in mission efforts around the world, mostly in India, for decades, until the death of J.C. in the winter of 2008. His work of writing, lessons, printing, publishing and distributing Christian literature

has continued through the efforts of his dedicated wife and others of the “World Evangelism Team”.



The J. C. Choate family

That first Sunday in 98 per cent Muslim Pakistan, I spoke 4 times to small groups of Christians in and around Karachi, walking among them and driving from one village to another. J.C. was intent on getting me quickly into the work, before accompanying us to Lahore a few days later, 800 miles to the north, aboard a big Pakistan International Airlines plane.

It seemed the plane struggled due to winds and a heavy load of cargo. I hoped down inside that the Pakistani pilot was well trained. I began silently missing the security I felt in the West and the confidence I had in the American people, namely flying with American pilots.

We landed and were greeted warmly by a church group of Pakistanis, singing songs written or modified especially for us, “How Do You Do Petty Family, How Are You?” It was delightful, and their hospitality caused us to feel almost like celebrities.

It was not long until we were into the work in earnest. Poverty was evident in all that we did. People came for help. On the streets beggars sat asking for alms, and the church members told us we had to help the poor from the very beginning of our work. This lack of material needs feeds the flames of resentment against the West and their religion and their politics.

These experiences revealed things about why the Muslims can hate the wealth of America. They showed us why they can identify with minorities around the world. It explained why in our own country Islam can, and does, gain footholds in black communities.

The clash between haves and have-nots in Muslim countries is squelched by the rich and powerful. Such was the case in Iraq when Saddam simply eliminated a lot of the weak and impoverished if they spoke against him. That is a Muslim way among powerful fanatics.

While in America we do what we can to raise the standards of the poor. They are killed or given a 'pittance' in alms by the people in an Islamic nation. This "alms-giving" is a tenet of Islam and is required, but the alms can be the tiniest of donations. Fractions of cents constitute acceptable contributions. The poor scrape out a bare existence, and the donor goes on with his conscience eased. This is one of the unrealities of sincerity among the common Muslims.

We would learn more as we lived and worked among these people, some of whom we learned to love, and others we did not. They were like other people; there were extremes of good people and those at the other end of the spectrum.

Sylvia began having concerns of a deep nature when she observed a bearded man touch a lighted cigarette to the arm of our 5-year-old daughter, Diana. When she looked startled and puzzled, he ran away laughing. Through her tears, she asked, "Why did he hurt me? I guess he doesn't know about Jesus."

Of course, Sylvia quickly pulled Diana into the car and departed, but the deep reality of that episode was burned into all of us. We were as careful and observant as we could be with our children, made even more so when that experience revealed something more about the Muslim heart and mentality. Watching them beat their animals and torture dogs, which were considered 'unclean' by Muslim law, and fight each other in the streets caused us to see the utter darkness inside the real character of some of these more ruthless people.

Some of these experiences have been, and will forever be, repeated over and over, day-by-day, year-by-year, as they have been century after century. There is buried inside many Muslims a mean heart, while there is deep-seated warmth and goodness in many other Muslims. Islam forces into some a desire to hurt, to fight, to kill, to die in their passionate belief in the 'cause of Allah.'

The softhearted Muslim lives in a crushed emotional state, harboring a desire to 'break free' and live in peace and freedom. Pressures tear at their inner being in their whirl of uncertainty and confusion.

Many question, “How can I be true to my family and long to be free of the yoke of Islam?” Pakistani families, who had left Islam and become Christians, were considered lower even than the second-class Christian families born into Christian homes. Their lives were entangled with feelings for the unfairness of the Muslim attitude and the tolerance of the Christian way. The culture under which they had lived filled them with thoughts to “take the advantage,” while their Christian impulses were to “do to others as you want them to do to you.”

These conflicting outlooks on life ultimately would lead many to give up on Christianity in practice. They would always be under the eye of suspicion had they tried to return to the mosque. The souls shattered in these ‘partial conversions’ and ‘feigned departures’ from Islam are left somewhat in limbo, awaiting only the judgment of God. They evoke pity and sympathy.

This sympathy does not extend to most of those in the ‘land of the pure,’ Pakistan. For example, a policeman stopped me every time I drove my church-owned VW Microbus through his intersection where he labored hard, directing ignorant drivers and chaotic traffic. He just stopped me for no reason other than to harass the American, speaking English to me but saying nothing.

After days of this I decided I would try to put an end to it. Since those old model VWs had a sort of safety switch to keep children from turning on the key, I suppose, I thought I might be able to use that novelty.

I killed the car as the self-fun-loving officer ordered me to stop. He gave me his litany of nonsense and told me to “move on.” I knew the car well and was aware it would not start easily, so I let the motor turn over a couple of times and released the key. After doing this 2 or 3 times I invited him to try to start it. By now he was a bit eager to get me out of his intersection, so he desperately tried to turn the key. Not knowing the trick to give the key a little ‘lift’ before turning it, he could not get it to start. He said, “You have to move on; this is embarrassing.”

When he began to try to push the car, I lifted the key and started the engine. As I pulled away I smiled and waved back at him. Needless to say the harassment never occurred again, and he would not look me in the eye when I drove through that intersection thereafter.

Was this a playful thing? Was it a power thing? Was it truly just to harass a non-Muslim? I cannot say, but it was for sure a Muslim thing that required standing up against.

The Volkswagen Microbus was left in Lahore by Gordon Hogan for the work of the missionary who followed him. That turned out to be me. Gordon drove this vehicle from Germany all the way to the Pakistan-India border, where the Hogans were turned back because they could not get visas to work in India. Gordon discussed it with his wife, Jane, and they decided to stay in Lahore and work, provided that they could obtain work permits and long-term visas. They were granted the visas, and began preaching the gospel there in 1960.



My run-ins with the police in Lahore were few but never pleasant. On one occasion I had a collision with a military jeep while riding my Vespa-type motor scooter (from Sears), which we had brought over from the U.S. The wreck knocked me down hard, injuring my knee. The driver of the jeep stepped out and saw me bleeding. He called over the army officer for whom he was driving, and the captain said, “Do you need help?”

I told him I thought I should be taken to the hospital. Apparently, he judged differently, because he got back into the jeep and drove away. I got up and pushed my motor scooter aside, hailed a passing truck, and persuaded him to get my scooter and me home.

Persuasion always comes in many Muslim places with a good deal of ‘baksheesh,’ payola. It is this ‘greasing of the palm’ that gets many a thing done in those lands. This fact led me to always bring back a gift to the ‘sheriff’ in Lahore when I traveled. He was actually the chief of police who had to personally sign my papers when I left the country and when I returned. He would respond to me always when I asked him if he needed anything from where I would be going, with a phrase like, “You do not have to bring back anything to me....but....if you wanted to bring back crochet-

ing yarn for my mother she would appreciate it.” You can be sure I brought back her yarn.

Tipping, or baksheesh, was an accepted way of commerce, much more so there than tipping a waiter in the U.S. It was overt in Pakistan, and things did not happen without it. Even drivers of motorized rickshaws or horse-drawn ‘tongas,’ passenger carts, expected their fare and extra.

One tonga driver asked me if I wanted a “Pakistani ‘behbeh,’” which seemed to mean harlot. My decline irritated him, and he whipped the horse angrily, running him down the highly traveled Ferozepur Road much faster than I liked. His hot, then cold, stare when I stepped down caused me to give him his fare and extra, plus baksheesh, which brought to his bony face a victorious smile. Indeed these ‘small losses’ on my part seemed inevitable, and giving in at times rather than causing a scene or creating an unnecessary enemy made the work continue to move along. Some Americans fought the principle of these little forms of being ‘gypped,’ but I decided early to pick my fights, and give in on the little issues.

Sylvia and I concluded that the “Pakistani behbeh” ‘signal’ was a red towel hanging from the open-air windowsills of houses near the huge Bahd Shahi mosque. We did not see any other clothes or different colored towels hanging that way at any rate.

Although the Muslims claim the corruption of Islamic nations comes from the West, the truth is far from that. Stealing and cheating, killing and prostitution are rampant in Pakistan. Yes, you do see fingers missing as a result of punishment for crimes, but the sight is rare.

More likely policemen mete out punishment on the spot. Regularly a policeman will pull a truck driver over for some kind of inspection and reach inside the cab to pound him about the head and shoulders with his fist. When he has given him a sufficient number of blows to the head, he tells him to “move on.”

The violence in the Muslim carries into all levels of existence. The governments of Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan remain on ‘collision course’ permanently. This confrontational readiness manifests itself in conflict after conflict. In 1965, all-out war broke out over the disputed land of Kashmir.

We were instructed during that time by officials to “mud our cars,” which meant to completely cover them with mud to make them harder to see against the tawny color of the sand and soil and general cast of the

land. We were ordered to stay inside during the conflict, an impossible task, of course.

Indian fighter jets on occasions flew into Pakistan air space and close over the city of Lahore. These sorties were for surveillance, but Sylvia witnessed a dogfight in the sky above our compound during the conflict.

Sylvia and I seriously considered our circumstances and our mission, weighing that against the safety, physical and mental, in this Muslim world. We wondered how long we could hold out if the Indian soldiers caught us in a major military assault on Lahore. I kept wondering if we should try to depart Pakistan on our own, or at least move further into the interior away from the border.

My question was answered when a policeman stopped me in my ‘muddy’ VW and had me sign a paper restricting my movements to within the city of Lahore, and again told me to “stay inside.”

Chapter Three

Evacuation to Tehran

In a few days, the inevitable came about. All non-essential personnel were ordered to make plans to evacuate Pakistan.

We discussed the situation of the church and our mission with our good friends, F.M. and Charlotte Perry. We wanted to leave the church compound in the good hands of our strongest members if indeed we were taken away.

F.M. worked with the Public Safety Division of the USAID, and had a large house. He suggested we set up the Ghulam Masih family at the compound and in our residence adjoining the church chapel. If we could do that and feel secure about it, he said, then we could move in with them for the “short wait” to evacuate. We seriously reluctantly agreed, realizing the compound needed someone in residence for its protection, even against military confiscation.

After all, my wife and three small children were in my care and were solely my responsibility. The activities of missionaries often fall outside the purview of the US Embassy regulations and advisement. That meant the decisions I would make would be mostly my own, as the Embassy did not consider me either ‘essential’ or ‘non-essential.’ We made the arrangements for the Masih family to take over the compound and our house and living quarters; and we took the things with which we would evacuate and moved to the Perrys’ house for temporary accommodations. They were terrific and made us feel as though we were not imposing. Yet we wanted it to be a very short stay.

I will admit the commissary food was enjoyable, and Asghar, their cook, was good, adjusting easily to 5 ‘guests’ to serve. The ‘guest’ status wore thin after the arrival of the evacuation planes was delayed again and again because the India government would not grant permission for the US Air Force to fly over Indian air space.

Bombs were hitting close enough for us to hear them and see the flashes in the night sky. We saw in the distance one house ablaze. F.M. watched two Pakistani fighters shoot down an Indian plane.

The Lahore airport, fifteen miles away, was bombed. One American member came by the house to see if we knew anything about plans to leave. She told us their house shook from some bombs hitting nearby them.

We were hearing reports from some of the church members that a huge tank battle was occurring in the town of Sialkot, 45 miles north of Lahore. One of our Pakistani evangelists was among the refugees coming from there into Lahore, seeking safety from the fighting.

Finally, after a long week living in the house of the Perrys, we got word from the US Embassy to assemble at the USAID staff house at 5:00 am Wednesday morning, September 15, 1965. The word still was that we would fly to Jerusalem if all visas could be obtained. If there were a hitch in the plan, we would then fly to Switzerland. By then we were resigned to not knowing where we might go, but we all had one thing in common, "We were ready to go." Anywhere would be fine, just out of Pakistan.

At 4:00 am we were all up and dressed for our drive to the staff house, bus ride to the Lahore airport, and flight out! The Perry family was scheduled out on the first plane, and we were assigned the fourth plane. F.M. was considered essential as a government worker, and he had no choice in the matter; he stayed behind.

The C – 130 cargo planes were at the airport, ready and waiting. Their crews were eager to get us boarded and settled into our jump seats, in order to get off and away to a destination they either secretly knew and would not tell, or one where they would be told once we were air-borne.

One of the big plane's engines would not start. Everyone on the plane gasped thinking, "What a way to start a flight out of a battle zone." We were moved hurriedly to another airplane, which started quickly and took us out of there with no further problem.

From that time on the evacuation was uneventful except for the uncomfortable seats on the planes, but nobody complained. Perhaps for security reasons the word was floated that we would go to Jerusalem or Switzerland, then to Beirut or Athens. As we ascended and moved further out over Pakistan, heading west, we were told we were en route to Tehran, Iran. Little did we know this flight and its landing in "Persia," as it was known in earlier times, would be a life-changing experience for us in the coming years, and indeed for the rest of our lives.

Four hours after our takeoff we made our approach to Mehrabad Airport, low over Tehran, which upon our descent looked like a modern European city compared to the old city of Lahore. There was early snow on the Alborz Mountains rimming the huge metropolis to the north.

Chapter Four

First Impressions of Tehran

Landing at the well-equipped Mehrabad Airport we were met on the ground a few feet from the plane by buses. Very soon we were rolling out of the airport, after a brief passport check.

The caravan of buses drove us without hesitation to a ‘registration building’ to “sign in” and retrieve our passports before being bused to the U.S. Embassy for processing and assignment to an American “host family,” who would literally take us in and show us around, acquainting us with the city and other people, both American and Iranian.

Our host family was Sergeant Les Crowley and his wife, Priscilla, who Sylvia called ‘people with big generous hearts.’ After several days of living in the home of the Crowleys we all decided it was time we found a place on our own. Priscilla Crowley and I drove to a hotel used by Americans as they settle in to Tehran. It was about 4 blocks from the U.S. Embassy, where we would be able to eat as long as we were considered ‘refugees.’ That status would end in six weeks if we were not able to get back to Lahore before then.

The Crowleys’ driver took us and our belongings to the Commodore Hotel, which had an interior courtyard surrounded and enclosed by rooms rising several floors. Only an entry to the main street on the front afforded passage by vehicles, and it was just large enough for a bus to enter under an archway bearing the name of the hotel. It was structured like a fortification.

As soon as we had time to unload all we were allowed to bring to Tehran on the Air Force planes and under strict regulations in our assigned rooms, we were instructed that we could eat right away in the hotel restaurant. Before going down for a breakfast, we discussed getting Don Jr. off to the Iranian school. We made arrangements for me to take him by bus and I went with him to be sure he got there all right, but I couldn’t get myself understood well enough to get the bus back to the hotel. I just chose to walk the 5 miles and see the sights of the streets on my way back. The school was to get Don Jr. back on the bus in the afternoon and get him back to the hotel when the school day ended. Our anxiety ran a little high at that idea, as we knew little in this strange land.

We did not know how long this might be home, but the American quasi-joke went around that we would be there until Pakistan and India

“ran out of bullets.” It was clear that these American patriots did not think highly of the military capability of these two very populous enemies. Naturally, we wanted the fighting to end as quickly as possible in order for us to get back to our work and to get the children back in school. We all felt it would be only a matter of days, but still we talked among ourselves about seeing Tehran and learning all we could about yet another Muslim country, this one made up primarily of Shiites.

We knew something of the Shiites, as we had seen bloody pictures of their self-flagellation during Moharram, a holy time celebrating the martyrdom of Hussein, who was the grandson of Mohammed, the founder of Islam. These Muslims in the separatist philosophy of Ali, the son in law of Mohammed, have a more fanatical and liberal and — as we understand — passionately violent belief structure than do the Pakistani Sunnis.

We did tour the city sites as we learned them from our hotel staff and suggestions from the other refugees who had seen a variety of things. We saw the Golestan Palace, where the Shah-an-shah (King of Kings) Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, met for some of his conferences, and where the Empress Farah, last wife of the Shah, had many of her ladies’ functions. The royal family lived up in the northern part of the sprawling city in the Niavaran Palace, in a section called Shemiran.

The beautiful Golestan Palace was ornate, with mirrors and geometric shapes typical of Islamic art and architecture, some of the most interesting in the world. Decades of history had been made in that richly decorated structure.

As I settled into the city’s activity, clamor and excitement, I began to watch and study the people. I liked them. They seemed exuberant, a trait that would not likely be used to describe the Pakistanis, as they did not convey the enthusiasm shown here by these Muslims of somewhat higher means. Along with being optimistic and expressive the people on the streets seemed self-confident, even arrogantly self-reliant. But I liked the fiery explosiveness evident in many of them.

There was some bawdiness in them. One man bounced and jumped and skipped happily along the very broad sidewalks, with holes cut out of them where trees grew and were determinedly preserved, as they were scarce in a desert city such as this.

Another young man met a girl covered with the cloth they call a ‘chador’ (meaning ‘tent’ in Farsi). As he went by her he reached over and cupped her breast in his hand; she simply ducked away, frowned lightly,

and both kept moving in their opposite directions with nothing further to the episode.

A middle aged man walking briskly toward me and smiling, audibly passed gas 4 or 5 times, slapping his leg with his left hand, and ‘fired’ an imagined pistol with his right hand toward some invisible target on down the sidewalk as he went by me.

My walk on the streets of Tehran was a quick learning experience. We knew no Farsi, but we learned the word for the fast-moving clamorous traffic was ‘sho-luuk,’ which literally means ‘chaos,’ a perfect word for the erratic driving we observed during our stay. Sylvia and I observed that first day out on the streets, a motorcycle driver taking to the wide sidewalk to make better time. Even on occasions the small 6-seated Peykan cars pulled up on the very widest sidewalks to get around a jam. Pedestrians had to constantly be aware that they might at any time confront a vehicle crowding them off the walks.

We learned to ‘hop an orange taxi’ to get around. We had an address of a house where the church met for Sunday worship. There was no official recognition of our fellowship, and little mission work had been done in this devoutly Muslim country. The taxi driver had a hard time locating the house. Of course, the meter continued to click more and more as he tried street after street. We could be no help, as badly as we wanted to stop that meter. We did learn the taxi drivers would take advantage of us, not unlike most places in the world.

One of the taxi drivers that stayed close to the Commodore Hotel was named Danny. He apparently liked the tips the Americans gave him. He spoke English very well, and held good conversations with us...and Danny had “friends in low places.”

Sylvia’s description of Danny was something like, “He spoke Brooklyn English. He prized himself pretty highly, and considered himself just what every American woman was looking for.” She considered him a con man, saying what he thought we wanted to hear.

At some point Danny took her to see some small apartments, where we thought we might need to stay if we could not get out and back to Pakistan soon. After Danny led her and our two little daughters into show them one, she felt he was making moves to keep her there. She became afraid, seriously afraid, and ran out into the street with the girls, and caught another ride back to the hotel.

On one ride we drove by two women walking away from us, and Danny made a ‘macho-male’ comment about their figures. He asked me what I thought of them, and then asked if I’d like to meet one. I assured him that I didn’t, but I did agree with one thing, the Iranian race of people were extremely nice looking. I felt many of the Iranian women were among the most beautiful in the world.

I didn’t rush to the hotel room and say that to Sylvia, but in the course of some of our talk it came up. She responded that she thought the men of Iran were as handsome as any she had seen anywhere. Although I wasn’t aware of it Sylvia knew that the Iranians were the result of European people and Asian people intermarrying and forming families. The descendants of these Indo-Europeans were an extremely good-looking race.

Although the people generally were good looking and would often say something to us in English we began developing distrust in them. The drivers always wanted more money for their fare than we gave them; no matter what we gave it was never enough for what they had done for us. They seemed to believe they deserved more, and we would learn that is an enduring trait of the Iranians at seemingly all levels of society and government.

Likewise, the shopkeepers raised the prices far above the value of an article we might want to buy. It helped when we learned something about bargaining, but still they wanted a lot more than the value of the object. I developed a phrase for that...“They want a dollar for a dime.” So it was.

News would come from Pakistan that the fighting was remaining at a high level. Ceasefires would be made and broken by both sides. China made it clear they were backing Pakistan against their long time enemy, however, they publicly offered nothing to them but rhetoric.

The sustained fighting and the growing concern for safety, as well as the disdain Sylvia felt about the men of Iran, caused me to consider alternatives to staying much longer in Tehran. I made application for visas to Beirut, Lebanon, where we thought we could be of help to the Christians while we waited to return to Lahore. The church eldership in Florida approved the plan because the expenses in Tehran were going to jump greatly when the U.S. government ended the “refugee support.” That would be in a few short days.

Two weeks after we came to Iran, I got the Lebanon visas, and we planned to fly there. In the meantime, however, there seemed to be some

positive reports from Pakistan that the war might be subsiding. It left me in a dilemma – stay in Tehran, go to Beirut, return to Lahore? My work was in Lahore.

I didn't want to take the family back into Lahore prematurely, while there was still danger. I pondered going back alone to be with the small church and new Christians. Our five-year-old Diana questioned, "You're gonna' get your head chopped off?"

Going back meant leaving Sylvia in Tehran with the children, where she felt the men were ego-filled and pushed themselves on the women, unquestionably a true observation. She tried to look on the positive side and told me she would be okay if I felt I needed to go back. She went over some of what she had observed in Tehran.

"It is a really modern city with fashionably-dressed women; although, many of them wear a huge cloth called a 'chador' that completely covers them. They are usually black, but sometime gray and spotted with very small white dots.

"Taxis here don't pick you up unless they happen to be planning to pass your destination. The main streets have big, wide sidewalks. If the street is too crowded, it isn't at all unusual to see a car turn onto the sidewalk and drive on it."

She saw these mixed impressions of Tehran as things difficult to look past. She did not develop a close feeling for the Iranians, nor did she feel any 'burden' to try to work among them to tell them about Jesus Christ. She saw them, rather, as arrogant, self-willed, unfair, and unreceptive.

With her thoughts opened to me I began planning to try to get us all out of Iran as expediently as I could. I turned over in my mind the details of a plan to go back to Karachi alone, talk with the Choates about the war and their best judgment about my returning to Lahore, and how best to bring Sylvia and the children back into Pakistan.

The war had not spread into Karachi proper, but not far to the northeast there had been stories of bombings by India. I wired J.C. and told him my plan. He invited me to their home to stay as long as necessary. I tried to think it through well.

It was October 1, as we looked out the Commodore Hotel window to the mountains, now covered with a fairly heavy coat of fresh snow. They were majestic and dominant. Their massive beauty took even Sylvia.

These mountains would one day play important roles in our lives, and she stared at them with little-girl wonder, drawn to them. It was almost as if she knew something she could not tell.

Due to the general climate of unrest among the nations of Islam, American evacuees began coming into Tehran from Amman, Jordan, and Cairo, Egypt. We did not know what that signified, but history would reveal in about 1 ½ years that our government knew Israel and her Arab neighbors would be in extremely hot combat. And though it would be swift, that war would change maps and history for decades to come. Again Muslims would be involved in conflicts. This had been true in much of history and would be much more true in the future. The few short months we had been working among Muslims had shown us the very antagonistic, violent, sometime ruthless nature of the “Muslim mentality.”

I became uneasier about leaving the family in Tehran, but with assurances from Sylvia that she would remain in the ‘safe areas’ of the hotel and embassy, school, and friends, I carried out my plans. On October 3, I boarded a Pakistan International Airline jet bound for Karachi, and headed back to Lahore, very eager to learn the state of the church, the city, and our home.

The usually heavily traveled route had only a handful of passengers. This flight, I was told, was the first one into Pakistan from Tehran since the war reached its peak of fighting. It was a quiet, somber and anxious trip back in.

J.C. picked me up at the airport in Karachi for a short stay with them. While I was there for a day and a night we rehearsed all that had happened. He asked about the status of the church in Tehran. I told him it was virtually non-existent, with only Americans assembling on Sunday for worship in a member’s home.

He thought quietly but out loud, “Some one should go there and establish a church among the Iranians.” He had a wistful look in his eye like he might want to be that one; or perhaps I just made that interpretation.

J.C. and Betty readily told me Sylvia and the children could come and live with them until the Lahore schools opened. It was a welcomed idea. We cabled Sylvia with the invitation, and she said she would make plans to accept that offer.

Chapter Five

Back to Lahore after the War

Sylvia reserved seats on Iran Air for October 11 for their trip to Karachi, in the hope that the flight would actually take off on that date. In that interval I flew to Lahore to find the church pretty well scattered, although a remnant had continued to meet.

Since the Masih family remained in our house, F.M. invited me to stay with them until proper arrangements could be made. I accepted

After I returned to Pakistan, Sylvia and the children had settled into a routine life in Tehran's Commodore Hotel. When news from the embassy was given that all the dependents from Lahore were to either move on to the States, or to Europe, or to find less expensive living quarters within the city, Sylvia had to make a decision. She wanted to return to Pakistan to continue work with the church.

Since J.C. and Betty had made their generous offer for her and the children to stay in their home until we could be reunited in Lahore, she contacted them. They advised her that the schools were open in Karachi. Betty and J.C. would welcome her help in the work they were doing and open their home as a place where she and the children could live as long as needed. She would make the arrangements necessary to depart Iran, and in the meantime she would make the life of her children as comfortable as possible in their temporary home in this rather unique and hard-hitting culture.

Life in Tehran was not bad, but not very productive, as she could not speak any Farsi at all. There was a prevailing sense of danger that the girls might be kidnapped; even boys were often taken and sold into underground slavery. Diana was a blond, and blondes were often sold into bondage, headed for a life of sexual degradation.

Beth was tiny and would still be useful in the underground rug weaving market. Small children were used in the weaving of the beautiful Persian carpets. When their hands became too large to tie the knots those children were put into unspeakable stations of bondage. This was constantly on Sylvia's mind as she spent her time without being able to feel the protection she said she always felt when we were together.

She began the job of finding an apartment in case there was no way to get to Karachi. A cab driver befriended her and showed her several apartments, but on one occasion doubt of his integrity became apparent

to her. She searched more desperately for assurance that Iran Air would fly her and the children to Karachi. When that was uncertain, she looked beyond that airline, and, at last, found Swiss Air agreeable to fly into Karachi, so she bought a ticket for the four of them, forgetting the thought of flying Iran Air. There was one snag: She had neither cash nor check. Determined to get those tickets she drew a check on a piece of paper, wrote the correct amount in for the ticket and signed it, assuring the airline agent the U.S. bank would accept it. Having been an employee in a Sulphur Springs, Texas bank in years past, she was able to explain that the check would be honored. The agent took the check with raised-eye brow reluctance.

With tickets in hand she made the next (and what would be her last) trip to the embassy to advise the government of her plans. She was met with a strong objection, even denial to grant permission for her returning to Pakistan. She assured the officer she was not asking permission; rather, she was advising them of her plans as she had been told to do when the family first arrived in Tehran. The officer in charge then with a loud voice told her she would no longer be recognized as an American citizen should she follow through with her plan. She thanked him for the safety the embassy had offered, but she had a job to do and to Pakistan she and the children would fly. Her tickets in hand and her children in tow, she turned her back on the American officer.

Back at the hotel she made arrangements to leave. Until that moment she had not realized her flight was for 3:00 am. The streets of Tehran were extremely dangerous in the dark hours of the night. She called Sgt. Crowley for help, and he agreed to pick her and the children up the next morning and take them to the airport.

At the airport Sgt. Crowley assisted Sylvia and the children to the right areas and even paid the airport tax (the equivalent of \$5). He showed her where her flight would take her and when she should arrive in Karachi. He left a very confident mother and children; confident they would soon be back on familiar grounds.

Sylvia could not ever imagine what actually lay ahead. She and the children were the only occupants on the airplane, but no fear was in her mind. Her only thoughts were of finally being away from a land quite modern at first sight, but a place where underlying suspicion was a constant; a land where the men showed a type of hospitality, but their eyes betrayed a seriously different story; a land where women scurried about with an attitude of an ever-underlying fear.

The flight plan as told to Sylvia was one that would take her and the children south to a city called Zahedan where she would then fly across the border to Pakistan, landing in Karachi. The flight was not to take many hours, and morning light would be seen in Karachi. She was exceedingly happy to be returning to her adopted home of Pakistan upon leaving the hostile, foreign land long called Persia.

For whatever reason the flight plan was not as she had been told. In a 'short' time the plane landed. It was still dark. An attendant led Sylvia and the children off the plane, took away her passport (she and the children were all on the one passport), and left them standing beside the plane. She remembered the words I had drilled into her, "Never give up your passport. Give up your life before you give up your U.S. Passport." She recalled the embassy officer's harsh words, "You go back to Pakistan and the U.S. Government will no longer recognize you as a citizen of the United States." In her mind the passport was useless, and she was prepared at that time to give up her citizenship, believing with all her heart that her citizenship was in a much higher place.

Sylvia was given no instructions; she was just left in the desert sand with three children and their luggage beside her. Where they landed did not even appear to be a landing strip. In the very far distance she did see some lights from a building. In conversations from within the plane she remembered the word Mashad. Was she near Mashad? Were the distant lights those of the Mashad Airport? Mashad was north near the Russian border, not south near the Pakistan border, where she had expected to land.

Sylvia was frightened, but she could not allow that to transfer to the children, as already they were showing concern and asking questions. Don, our son of 8 years, was putting together facts and realizing something was wrong. He asked, "What are we going to do now?" In answer Sylvia said, "Let's draw pictures in the sand." The night sky on that desert was beautiful, Sylvia observed; and the stars and moon gave light to the tawny-colored sand floor.

Not having any idea of what to do or what was to be done, Sylvia decided to wait out the dark, and when the sun gave more light she would make a decision. Right now she tried to maintain calm for the sake of the children.

Before bright daylight another plane flew in and opened its doors. A man came out, loaded onto the plane Sylvia and the three children with all their luggage, and flew away. Again, the four of them were the only

passengers taking that flight. Her next stop would be Zahedan at the border of Pakistan. Why the incident in Mashad occurred, Sylvia never knew, nor could she understand what exactly had taken place. She did, however, understand the meaning of ‘real fear’ after the experience.

The plane landed in Zahedan. Upon deplaning she was given her passport with no explanation; it was just handed to her. Everything seemed to be in order. She would always wonder where that passport had been and in what part of some ‘game’ she had been a participant?

In the Zahedan terminal more controversy lay ahead. She was physically and mentally weary and the children were becoming tired and hungry. She had had virtually no sleep and not much food in the last 24 hours. After the appropriate length of time waiting to board the plane for Karachi, she was motioned to a desk and told her plane awaited. However, there was a matter of airport tax she owed.

“Please pay,” she was told. She explained she had paid in Tehran.

“Receipt, please,” the clerk requested.

Sylvia then realized she had no receipt. She decided that Sgt. Crowley must have just put it in his pocket in Tehran. She explained the situation to non-sympathetic ears, even ears not very well understanding English, and she had no command of the Farsi language in these environs. She was not going to be allowed on that plane without paying the required tax. She did understand that!

This was not the first time Sylvia had had stand-offs. Sometimes the principle overtook her logic. She never feared standing for principle. ‘Right must win!’, she had always believed.

Sylvia looked out the window of the terminal. The plane she and the children were supposed to be on was now rolling down the runway. She pointed through the window to the plane and screamed, “That is my plane! Stop that plane!”

The agent calmly and smugly opened his hand, “Tax, please.”

Sylvia firmly and quietly said, “No.”

The plane continued to slowly taxi toward a takeoff.

Sylvia began to squeeze the tears from her eyes. Beth began to cry. Diana began to cry. Don stepped up as tall as his little eight-year-old frame could stretch and with a voice of control and authority as the first-born son announced, “You are making my mother cry. Stop that plane!”

Neither a sneer nor amusement came over the attendant's face. How much English he understood was not clear; probably much more than he wanted known, but Sylvia was not bluffed. She won the standoff.

The attendant called to the pilot in the cockpit and stopped the plane. The captain returned the plane to the gate of embarkation, came down the stairs, and walked to Sylvia to explain the dilemma. Sylvia responded by repeating her explanation. He smiled and said, "I will pay the tax. You just sign this document so I can be reimbursed."

The document was in Farsi. Sylvia refused to sign it, not having any idea what she would be signing. The captain showed signs of frustration and said, "Okay. I will pay the tax. Get on the plane. We will go to Karachi."

On this leg of the trip there was only one other passenger on the plane, an Iranian student bound for Lahore University. When the plane arrived at the Karachi Airport, the door opened and, there, standing in the doorway at the top of the stairs, eager to descend, stood Sylvia and the children! They looked down to see the three of us, Betty and J. C. and me with big relieved smiles. Sylvia confided to us her sincere relief at the 'great welcome' she felt when she spotted us. She did not know if I was going to be there for her arrival, as the trip from Lahore to Karachi in those days was not easily arranged.

On the day before Sylvia was to reach Karachi, I had taken a train down from Lahore across the Pakistani desert to be there when they were to arrive. Not ever again will I ride a train across a desert in a second-class "open air" coach. The 800-mile trip seemed as though it would never end. It was hot and sandy, loud and windy. The drop-down bunks were hard and gritty with sand. In my coach were three very large Pakistanis who bowed down every few hours in the aisle to meet their obligation to pray five times a day. I probably needed to pray that often, but I guess I seldom did pray on a scheduled basis.

Nonetheless they faced the front of the train and I sat at the rear of the coach. When they all prayed at once their rather significant posteriors gave a stark view of devout men. I looked out the window at the nothingness of the desert; but I knew there were souls of the lost among the dunes and flat land.

Regularly, also, a nursing mother in front of me (and facing me) fed her infant more often than the burly men prayed. I am in favor of a mother breast-feeding, but the space was a bit tight, so I looked out the window a lot before arriving in Karachi.

After I got to the Choates' home, Betty offered to wash my shirt made grimy from the trip, but I suggested we just throw it away. We did that.

The next day Sylvia and I were to be reunited, and I found it difficult to sleep. After all, the 8 days of wondering how she and the children were in Tehran, trying to 'round up' our Lahore church members, and making the one-day, one-night slow train ride from Lahore, battered my body a bit, and it would not readily relax. But when J.C., Betty, and I went to the Karachi Airport to meet my family I was energized. We were not sure she was on the flight from Iran. Last minute 'hitches' were the rule, not the exception, in this part of the world.

When the door was opened, the first passengers to disembark were Sylvia and Donnie, Diana, and Beth. The waving and shouting began immediately. Tears formed quickly in Sylvia's eyes and in my heart. We were excited and relieved to be back together again.

It was essential that the red tape of re-entry was taken care of to avoid time-consuming delays...or something worse, like detention at an official's office. That event could take days to sort out.

The next morning J.C. took Sylvia and me in his Renault vehicle to the Karachi police station for an hour wait as she was processed back into Pakistan and registered to reside in Karachi for a time limited to 2 months. Clearing that hurdle, we drove to the U.S. Embassy to make the same arrangements. By contrast, this was a 10-minute operation, and we were set for the next 2 months.

We noted that almost all the U.S. Embassy windows were broken and the big glass entrance was boarded up for protection against the Pakistanis protesting American policy. Several extra guards had been posted around the embassy in addition to the normal, rather light, contingent.

America was viewed by the Pakistani public as a supporter of India, while they believed China was on the side of Pakistan. Our country was blamed for virtually anything that went wrong for Pakistan and right for their big archrival to their east. This common enemy of China and Pakistan made them unlikely allies politically, but the Muslim philosophy did not allow for any "acceptance and tolerance" of non-Muslims. These conflicts of spiritual emotion and intellect caused unstable nervousness in relations at all levels of life and activity within the Pakistani populace and government.

This same turmoil of reason and logic explains much of why the Muslim nations are involved in over 90% of the fighting and ruthless violence in the world. They are at heart a violent, reactively resentful people at the least; and at the most they are fired up and relentlessly driven by the belief that Allah demands the conquest of the world for Islam, and that at any cost! This reality must not ever be forgotten! Like gravity, that force is constantly pulling at the passion of every Muslim. They are taught to be prepared to seize any advantage at anytime to further that cause, the true global jihad.

The missionary in a Muslim nation understands that, because he himself feels compelled to carry out what we have termed in Christianity as the “great commission” of Jesus Christ when He commanded His followers to, ***“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”*** That is why J.C. came to Karachi. That is why I chose to work in Lahore. The hope is to save the souls of any who are receptive to the message. We persuade men by the love and grace and saving power of a God who would have all men come to that knowledge. We work on the assumption of loving the souls of others.

The Muslim works on the assumption that fear will drive one to a belief in Allah. The fear was in old times instilled by the sword of Mohammed and his great swell of followers, who virtually told his Islamic prospects, “Believe or die.” That choice seemed fair to Mohammed then and to the teachers and practitioners of Islam today. They allow the hearer the choice of life or death. Embrace Islam or lose your life. Fair enough? Fair enough!

These Sunni Pakistanis feel their religion deeply, having migrated en masse from India in 1947 to the East and to the West territories of that vast country. The Muslims moving from Hindu India to West Pakistan met the Hindus traveling toward the large central region of India. The Muslims moving east out of central India formed East Pakistan, now called Bangladesh. History’s largest migration of 14 million people occurred, in which hundreds of thousands were slaughtered enroute to their destinations, simply because of the clash between the two religions, Hinduism and Islam.

This massive division of the country into three parts came about because Muslims cannot tolerate the ways of non-Muslims, and the Indians wanted to worship their gods in their own way. Indians are polytheistic while the Pakistanis are monotheistic.

These facts of Islam were spotlighted again in the 1965 war between Pakistan and India that had separated families, killed many, stopped

industry, wreaked havoc, and caused anguish in both countries. These things are some of the fruits of fanatical Muslim doctrine and zeal to reach their goal of establishing a world-wide caliphate. This Indo-Pakistan war is one mark of history among many, past and future.

J.C. and I discussed these matters during these few days we had together as the Choates took us in as refugees. J.C. kindly drove me to embassies of lands I was about to visit on a pre-planned trip to the Asian Missionary Workshop in Ibaraki, Japan.

After the workshop, I returned to Karachi and we began thinking seriously about an effective work plan for Lahore. On November 5, I flew to Lahore alone to begin reassembling the small group of Christians scattered by the war. Sylvia kept the children in school in Karachi and was active with the church there. She wrote a paragraph in her diary that only a mother could write:

“(During general assembly at church) Donnie read Ephesians 5:19,20. He was so thrilled to be asked to read that he took a bath before worship, put on a white shirt, a tie and dress slacks, and slicked back his hair. He stood up straight and tall and read loud, clear, and steady, but his little hands were trembling. When he finished he gave a little sigh and gave me a quick look. I almost burst with pride, watching that precious little boy standing before the church reading from the word of God.”

Although we were driven out and separated, these good things cheered us and made us feel rewarded for our work.

On December 4, 1965, all five of us left Karachi bound for Lahore to resume life and work among some battle-weary people — Christians and Muslims — in a city coming out of chaos. We moved out of the house on the church compound and into a recently-built house in a section of Lahore called Gulberg near a small business area with the name of Model Town.

The move from the church compound near Lahore Stadium to our home for the next several months was necessitated by the return of the Gordon Hogan family and put us a good half-mile from the building where the church met and where the Hogans would live. We enjoyed the new house in which we were the first residents.

As is the custom in Pakistan, the Americans and other foreigners hired ‘naukers,’ which we would call servants. They assisted the wife in carrying out the responsibilities of keeping house, as it was much more

difficult to do in Pakistan. The man pictured below was Jelani, who lived in his own small quarters with his wife and two small children at the back of our fenced compound. He was eager to learn how to do the work American women needed done.



Our return to Lahore set the stage for our next phase of work, to establish a program to train Pakistani men to teach the Bible and continue evangelistic activity. At our first meeting 13 men assembled to enter the program. I called the effort the beginning of the Lahore Christian College; although, our facilities were a little austere. The curriculum, however, covered an entire Bible college training schedule with a thorough array of courses, which I had assembled. The intent was to begin the work and expand it with the return to Lahore of the original missionary there of our fellowship, Gordon Hogan, with his wife, Jane, and family Beth, Dave, and Julie.

Originally, Gordon had driven across Pakistan and all the way from Europe in a Volkswagen Microbus, which he had purchased in Germany, en route to India to preach the gospel.

His plans were thwarted when he reached the border between India and Pakistan outside the city of Lahore. He could not enter India as a missionary, and his visa application was repeatedly denied. He and Jane and his sponsoring congregation in Florida agreed that, since he was in Lahore, perhaps his work could be done there. They reasoned that just

maybe God heard the cry of some of the Pakistanis in Lahore seeking the truth of the Lord, and this was His way of getting one of His evangelists to preach to them.

Gordon was able to get a visa to that land of almost pure Islam of the Sunni sect, and in February 1961 he began the work. He set about to establish a church among the Muslims, instead of the Hindus for whom he had prepared himself to preach. God does seem at times to overrule the missionary plans of man.

From that unlikely beginning, the church in Pakistan took hold and grew. In the future, the church would reportedly multiply to thousands of members and over 50 congregations. The Hogans would teach for years in Pakistan, then in Singapore, before returning to America, where they ultimately moved to Arkansas, and Searcy, where Gordon was teaching then as a professor of Bible at Harding University. He resigned that position in 2008.



The baptisms as pictured above were done in a corner of an old ‘cotton washing’ pool on the church compound. The men had concreted one corner of the pool and put stairs down into it. Mostly the Pakistani men who had been members long enough to understand the word of God regarding the baptism of a believer for the remission of sins were called on to do the baptizing.

Our own family tenure in Lahore was cut short. No doubt, again, the Lord seemingly stepped in for His wise reasons, unclear to me.

Chapter Six

Beleagured Return to Texas

Noble intent is sometime not sufficient to overcome reality. This was certainly true in my work in Lahore. After raising funds among churches to do the mission work in which I deeply believe, my plan with the eldership of my sponsoring congregation in Florida was generally laid out for a number of 4-year terms in Pakistan.

In fact, Sylvia and I had opted to leave a fine home in South Texas, good schools, excellent job, and spiritual, evangelistic church, in order to move to Lahore to do three things: evangelize, build up the members and train evangelists.

We had studied the Bible intently with an eye to being missionaries, trained ourselves as personal workers, focused on understanding mission methods, began learning the language of Urdu in a Berlitz School in Houston, dug into a study of the culture of Pakistan, and got into the basics of Islam studying on our own. We planned to carry the message of Christ to all 14 ‘Ostans,’ official regions of Pakistan through the Pakistanis themselves, our evangelist students.

These goals were to be carried out in certain ways on schedule in my own, “personal plan.” It sounded good to me and to the elders who were to oversee my work.

I intended to do this as the only American missionary working out of Lahore, because my understanding was that I was replacing the previous and only missionary in Lahore, Gordon Hogan. I was planning to direct my own work and make decisions to do things my own way. That tight, self-reliant, even selfish, attribute I possessed had served me well in industry, but the Lord’s work was something different.

The view I held was shattered when Gordon decided to return to his former work and get back to Lahore, while I was already ensconced there and doing things differently than he had. Suffice it to say that his return caused me to make decisions that changed my approach; and, as well, it caused my elders to lose trust and confidence in my ability to work as a part of a team.

Although, we sought solutions, up to and including a move on my part to another city, no acceptable option was found. The elders weighed possible resolutions, but came up with no good way to justify our continued work in Pakistan.

On top of the trouble in the work we were doing, Sylvia was expecting our 4th child in August 1966. These factors caused our recall to the U.S., and it broke her heart and smashed my ego. Yes, I felt some resentment and a little bitter, but soon after that, I realized that I had not left the overseers any other choice. We concluded, as we always have, it was God's will that we go to Lahore and His will that we return to Texas when we did.

Counting up, we realized that we had learned very much about a lot of things: Christianity, in real action; Pakistan; living in another culture; Islam; Urdu; pressure in danger; and not least, Tehran, Iran.

In addition, we did bring some Muslims to the knowledge of Christ, we did get some training done for potential evangelists, we met some wonderful American Christians in Lahore, and we did teach and strengthen members of the congregation. We believe these accomplishments to be part of the overall story, some of the reason God allowed us to travel and work among the Muslims. The other, and possibly, bigger part of His reason for our being in that region of the world was because we were introduced at that time to Tehran and the Shiite Muslims of Iran.

All these things notwithstanding, Sylvia returned to Texas with all 3 8/9 of our children in July 1966. Her trip was direct with her having no time to spare in her pregnancy while the airline would still let her fly. That left me to close down everything we were doing, which I finished by mid-August.

I, too, took a straight course to get home. A minor hitch occurred in Honolulu when the airlines went on strike, and I could not get a flight out. I had to 'endure' those beaches and beautiful ocean and majestic mountains for several days until the strike ended. Oh, yes, it was tough waiting on Waikiki Beach for a call to the airport to board a plane, but there was no other choice. I made up my mind I could do it!

On the third day I got a plane out and headed for Fort Worth, Texas, and the home of my mother, father, and little 11 year old sister, Karen (Kay) Lynn. We had agreed for Sylvia and our children to be there when I came home, and we would "re-launch" our lives from that home as our base.

When I returned I had a total worth of about \$100 to my name, with no furniture in storage and no vehicle. The church in Lake Jackson, Texas, sent a member to Fort Worth to give us a hurried collection of \$163 that he had taken from a couple of our friends, along with some groceries

and a few things for the children. Beside the clothes and personal things we brought back in our luggage on the airplane, that was it!

And Life Began All Over.

We were all healthy, whole, young, energetic, optimistic, equipped, and ready to start it all up again, stateside. With \$150 of our total assets of \$263, I bought a 1957 black and silver Chevrolet and began looking for work on my second day back home.

Robin was born in Fort Worth — our third girl, fourth and last child. She was healthy and was totally welcome in the family. We were relieved that she was born in Texas, and it extracted from our 9 year-old Don, “We are all Texans.” This added to the urgency of my finding work...and soon!

After but a few short days of job hunting I had two major offers, either of which I could have accepted and been happy. First, Frito-Lay offered me a position in R&D as the manager of an analytical laboratory in Irving, Texas. Second, Anderson-Clayton Foods (ACCO at that time) made an offer that would put me immediately into product development. I chose the latter because I did not like the prospective ‘routine’ of analytical work.

It proved to be the proper choice for me and for both companies. I liked my job, dug into it, and was soon to get a promotion, the first of three in three years. My company and I were a good fit.

Less than a year later the R&D department of ACCO moved to a large research facility in Richardson, Texas, the W. L. Clayton Research Center. We moved into that Dallas suburb and were quite content living between our parents’ homes, Fort Worth and Sulphur Springs, in East Texas.

During our time in Richardson we lived among young families and enjoyed an interesting life. Things were made more exciting because the delightful family of Marina Oswald Porter moved in four houses away from us. Her husband, Kenneth, had been a member of the church, and Marina was interested in knowing about God and his word. We became good friends and did what good neighbors do, with a lot of interaction.

In fact, during one VBS at Waterview Church of Christ, Sylvia took the two daughters of Marina and Lee Harvey Oswald — Junie and Rachel — to class with her. Marina made quite a hit with the members, standing and shaking hands with them all and speaking quite loudly, even during her first time at worship service. They all seemed to have loved her.

On occasions, while I was on my knees working in our small backyard vegetable garden, Marina would come down and sit beside the rows

and talk to me about her days in school in Russia and of the time she got drunk on cherry cider and went to school in that condition. As an adult she became a chemist, which in reality in Russia was a pharmacist. But the fact that she discussed chemistry gave her and me some more common ground on which to talk and build our friendship.

All the families on our block went boating and swimming and skiing on Lake Texhoma, 65 miles away, during the summers of the late 1960s. The only low time we had in Richardson was when we lost my father, leaving Mother and Kay on their own. It was a blow from which my mother never completely recovered, and she had to be cared for fulltime at Christ Haven in Gunter, Texas, in her latter years.

After three years in Richardson I was promoted to a Finished Goods Packaging Manager and moved to the ACCO manufacturing plant in Sherman, Texas. We were transferred in early summer of 1970, leaving the summer open to us to get adjusted to our new home before school began in the fall.

We found our church home, Woods Street Church of Christ with Bill Wiley preaching, and bought a house nearby. It was an old 2 story, 12 room, antebellum executive mansion, with four columns on the porch. We named the place “Shalimar”, place of joy. The name was taken from that of a beautiful and peaceful flower garden in Lahore built in the 17th century by Shah Jahan of India, who named it Shalimar Gardens. This was the same king who built the Taj Mahal in Agra, India.

We acquired a pure-bred sable collie we named Dawn Princess, and Pansy the gray cat, not so pure bred, but quite prolific when it came to offspring. We had a white picket fence out back, a double car garage, a shop attached to the garage, and 2 huge tall trees near our bedrooms. These two large water elms provided our oldest daughter, Diana, “friends” in the form of birds and squirrels, who would come close to her windows on the tree limbs as if to befriend her.

Shortly after purchasing the house — a house where our children could stretch out and enjoy their own individual rooms and have all their own things to themselves — I realized the position I had was too different from research and the private, quiet laboratory in which I wanted to work. I wanted to know how the work at Frito-Lay was going, since I had been made a generous offer of work there in their R&D department.

I visited with them and talked with the same old Dutch gentleman who had made me the offer four years earlier. He managed a section of

scientists working on major, general research products and processes to make snack foods. As fate would have it, he told me he had an opening in research and would really like to have me come to work for him.

Since research was what my education and life were all about, and because I was not all that pleased in production for the other plant, I went back to Sylvia and told her I thought I should take that position. She was delighted, but would be sad to take the children away from their church and school friends and from Shalimar.

We considered that, and I told her I would just commute the 140 miles round trip to work every day. We did that, and soon I bought a new Toyota to reduce the gasoline expense. After all, the gas cost at that time — early 1970s and in Sherman, Texas, on the back streets — was 17.9 cents per gallon. That was before the oil embargo imposed on the U.S. by the Islamic nations drove oil and gas prices to near a dollar a gallon. We began that life style in 1970. We got up each morning at 5:30, ate, and I drove away, leaving Sylvia and the children for 12 hours daily. The work at Frito-Lay was totally fulfilling, and the good life in Sherman caused the years to fly by quickly.

I published a book on missions, which I felt qualified to do with the background we had in Pakistan. The book grew out of a strange combination of circumstances: ACCO (which before I left them was changed to ACF, Anderson-Clayton Foods) paid for a Critical Creative Writing course at Austin College in Sherman, while I was their employee. I chose to write on missions as my original, creative work. That writing helped me define and formulate a clear philosophy of missions.

Our dentist and fellow church member, Frank Layman, financed the publishing, and became our close friend through the years. He and his family helped us lead a team of campaigners to a mission point of the Woods Street church in Kenora, Ontario, Canada, in those days of the early 70s. Our fellowship of believers became more mission-minded.

We lived in Sherman, enjoying Shalimar until 1974, as I continued to work at Frito-Lay and taught ‘missions’ in the church to high school youth. Then, the “fire in our bones” for missions and the desire to teach Christ in the Muslim world would take us away again from a peaceful place and life of comfort to a hard rugged place on the edge of another hot desert.

This time the sponsoring church, we prayed, would be our home congregation, the leaders of which knew us well, and had confidence we would do our job in the foreign culture and mystic land of Iran.

Chapter Seven

Fires of Passion Rekindled

Tehran was attractive to us as a potential center of an operation to spread the message of Christianity. Under the Shah-an-Shah, the King of Kings, there was a high degree of freedom of expression. As long as there was not a high profile of publicity, there was a fair amount of freedom to worship, albeit quietly, as a Christian.

This was unusual in a land made up of over 95 percent Muslims. Any anti-Christian activity was done by private citizens and “in the shadows.” Although the officials might be aware of some of the very real ‘persecution’ of non-Muslims throughout Iran, there was no reprisal or punishment that was meted out, not publicly anyway.

The newspaper did not report any of these abusive acts against the minority religions in the country. Even though the Tehran Journal news daily cooperated with the government of the Shah, its first loyalty was to Islam. In order to keep the presses rolling and the doors open, the newspaper kept its criticism of the Shah muzzled and its reporting of any anti-Christian opinions out of print. These policies did serve to keep the paper in business and available as a rather weak source of news to the public.

There was an extreme character trait of exaggerated confidence nationally radiating from Tehran in the “1970 Persia.” The country prospered with a \$20 billion annual revenue from oil sales, much of that to the United States, thanks to the government of the Shah, who Washington considered an ally in the region.

The attraction we felt from Tehran personally was neither the intrigue of the mysticism nor the pomp and pageantry of a “Persian King.” The royalty and monarchy of an egotistical tyrant, as was the Shah, offers adventure and glamour for sure. The draw for us, however, was the potential for establishing a strong base from which we could spread the gospel. We envisioned a training school for teaching Iranians to be evangelistic. We could imagine printing Christian literature in Tehran and distributing it throughout the country. We also had a vision of broadcasting our message on radio and beaming it to all the land in the area, even beyond the borders of Iran. That was the appeal of this ancient place, and that kindled the fires in our bones that drew me back into this state of high passion to return.

Having tasted all too lightly the flavor of Tehran in the short 1960s visit, I wanted to partake more deeply of all it had to offer. It seemed the

door was wide open to enter the old world, walking a long way back in time down one way and taking another street into the modern society of a fast-paced metropolis. It seemed Iran had both, camel caravan and Rolls Royce.

This enchanting land was ever on my mind as I spent my years in industry in Texas. I remembered hearing the multi-toned, extremely loud horn signaling the approach of a Rolls bearing the Shah and/or the Empress as it flew along the streets of the huge capitol city of 4 ½ million people. People lining the path of the heavily-plated Rolls cheered as it sped by them. On the inside, the royal passengers could be seen waving or slightly raising a scepter to their subjects.

That regal sight, I would contrast in my mind with an humble shoe shine boy who put a fine shine on my shoes, brushing and re-applying polish over and over, until he got the shoes looking like he wanted them. Almost a dozen layers of polish, rubbed in by hand and brushed off, made my black shoes look better than new. The cost was less than 50 cents. That was a memorable shine, and that was, more importantly, a memory of a Muslim in Tehran.

The ornate palaces and mosques of the city were at the forefront of my mind, while the sprawl of the poorer structures of Tehran were at the back. These hovels created from the poverty of so many housed a class of people that lived every day, every year, hand to mouth, never expecting anything to change to make their lives better, more pleasurable, or more productive. Hopelessness pervaded that level of society. The Shah took note of their meager existence and made available aid by which they survived at all.

The king built up the oil industry, constructed dams for producing electricity by waterpower, and planted millions of trees to improve the life of his people. Tall cranes stood high throughout Tehran, thirty two of them by actual count from a high vantage point I remember observing at one time.

One American Bell Helicopter worker made the comment about all the construction of high rises, “The Shah is building a lot of ‘ruins,’” referring to the cranes. Although his statement held a seed of truth, in that the buildings were not put up very substantially by western standards, they did represent progress and an improvement in the standard of living.

The public appearance of the city and its people was a strong tug on me to pull me back to the work I felt could and should be done. This “Jihad of Christianity” was a global war on sin and ignorance of God as we see it. Its weapons are those of love and grace, forgiveness and mercy,

sympathy and kindness. That contrasts strongly with the global jihad of Islam, built on terror and death, suicide and bombs, hate and intimidation.

The Christian missionary believes love is greater than hate, peace is better than war, life given is better than life taken. The effort expended to that end, to tell a nation those things, seemed worth the giving up of the fulfilling, challenging career at Frito-Lay, a loving church, and the home we called Shalimar. The fire burned in me to return to the land that continued to beckon, passively calling out for relief from a yoke of ignorance and incivility. We wanted to do the job well, and felt we needed to understand the Persian, Muslim mind. We studied their history, poetry, and the language of Farsi, taking lessons from a college student in Sherman. He was an Iranian and used elementary schoolbooks from which he taught us. It was done in our home, and did provide a bit of a foundation for us to learn more Farsi later in Tehran.

The research activity I carried out at the world's largest snack food company was significant. The compensation was good, as apparently was my work for that company, judging by the number of times they were able to rehire me. We had a strong relationship, and in my way of understanding there was no ill feeling as I considered leaving to go to Iran. I asked the research director if he would check the box stating that I was "eligible for rehire," which he did.

I left the company, July 19, 1974. On that last day, I said my 'goodbyes' to friends, standing at the door of the research department in Irving, Texas, about ¼ mile south of Texas Stadium. This was where America's team thrilled fans around the world, including me even when I was in Tehran, when I could get a chance to watch them on TV at some friend's house.

There was hugging and handshaking and cheek-kissing by the ladies (not the men; that would come later and many times in Tehran!). The last one to whom I said 'goodbye' was the vice president of research. As I walked by his office door, he motioned me in. When I walked in he said, "Well, is this it?"

I told him, "Yes, sir. I will be leaving the country Sunday."

He asked me to keep in touch from over there and to see him if "things don't work out." I replied that I had requested to be considered "eligible for rehire" in that case, and he said, "Good."

He asked me if I had studied Greek, to which I replied only by use of a Greek-English Diaglott. He advised me that I should learn Greek if

I wanted to tell others what the New Testament really says. I was silent, thinking.

At that time he rose, walked to his window and stared out. He said, "I wish I were going with you." These words came from a man who had risen through the ranks of a hugely successful first-class company and was in charge of scientists and engineers, technicians and administrators. They were men and women who changed the course of the snack food industry with innovative ideas and concepts.

The vice president was a Baptist man, who I believe was deeply spiritual, although some of his employees might disagree because of the hard way he drove them and berated them for mistakes. He wanted things done right and was very impatient when they were not. This was a man who had succeeded, and one who daily faced issues of deep substance and impact; yet one day he had seen me test frying a small sampling of potato chips in my lab fryer and told me, "Let me show you how to fry those slices." He took the fryer basket and 'submerger' from my hands and explained why he handled them as he did, "To make the slices fry evenly." This mark of quality was his style, and indeed the way the company performed to rise to the top of the industry.

When I left that company I felt as though I had taken a step that was irreversible, and of course, it seemed final and even vocationally perilous.

As I drove out of the parking lot that last time, the same way I had departed a thousand times, my new life began. The Frito-Lay salary ceased, and our financial support from the church began.

I had driven from Sherman and back daily for four years, about 1,000 trips. On that last one hour and fifteen minute trip to Sherman I recalled the many events of this final week we had in the U.S. Shalimar, our big white house, had been for sale since January, with but few lookers and no serious inquiries and no offers. The realtor and I had discussed his idea to just 'manage' a lease for us while we were away for a fair fee. I was of a mind to do it, and told Sylvia. That was the Sunday before our scheduled departure on the following Sunday, July 21.

She answered that she would like for me to wait. Neither of us preferred the idea of leasing the house, as it would cause trouble and be expensive to maintain on my "subsistence" pay, and from 8,000 miles away on top of the cost.

She was serious and firm.... and wise, as I had learned well through the years. I called and told the realtor not to draw up lease papers

yet. He strongly counseled me to not wait, since no prospective buyers had come to him. I quietly told him, “We’ll wait.”

Every day that last week I had driven to Frito-Lay, praying intently that we could sell Shalimar. When I arrived home the evening of the last Wednesday before we were scheduled to fly out of DFW for California I told Sylvia, “We can’t wait any longer, we have to lease.”

She looked up at me with calm assurance, and said softly, “Please wait.” It was one of those ‘roll your eyes’ moments, and I did. But in my heart of hearts, I knew Sylvia believed firmly and deeply that the house was not going to be a problem to us. I very reluctantly gave way to her desire.

On Friday morning, the day I left Frito-Lay, we got a call from the realtor, who said, “I have a buyer for your house. He has the cash, and he wants to buy it immediately.” I asked if the buyer had seen it, and he told me, “Only the outside.” We invited them over to see the inside; they walked through it, and said, “We’ll sign the papers tomorrow and give you your money.”

We have fasted and prayed at other times, and God has heard us. I am thankful he heard Sylvia this time and agreed with her request.

Saturday morning, as promised, the man gave us the money, the buyer got Shalimar, and we paid off all our debts, allowing us, again, to leave America totally debt free and unencumbered.

We spent that last night in the hospitable home of our minister, Bill Wiley and his wife, Margie. We sat up in the middle of the bed in their house and wrote checks to pay off all the remaining debts we owed.

The next day I spoke to the church in Sherman, and we were driven to DFW for our departing flight from that huge airport. We would go west and travel through Asia.

A nice caravan of members drove down with us and created a little congestion in the terminal seeing us off. We boarded and were led to first class seating, although, we had economy tickets. The attendant explained, “Anybody with that kind of send off should sit in first class.” And I rather smugly thought, “So we should.” After all, we were on the King’s business.

Sylvia and I and our son and three daughters were eager to enter a new phase of living. The engines roared and we were pressed to our seats. As usual the ascent ‘released us,’ and we felt the fire inside intensify with the prospects and possibilities of what our new life could bring. Little did we know what was really going to happen to us and to that country.

Chapter Eight

Traversing Asia to Reach Iran

The huge American Airline 747 had a full load of passengers, and the mood was good, happy and friendly. I had my brief case and a book I was reading, **For Missionaries Only** by Joe Cannon.

As I went by a gentleman who had obviously been taking advantage of the free drinks of the first class cabin, he flashed a tight smile and asked me, “Whash ya’ readin’?” He reached for my book and read the title. He lost his grin, returned my book, and made a fast but loose sign of the cross and looked away.

I was not sure what caused the reaction, but I wondered why the change. It typified the way people felt, I suppose, about spiritual matters in that day and time. It was odd to me because on Friday, two days earlier I was a chemist, and on ‘this’ day, two days later, I was a missionary.

That pretty well had been our life since our marriage, a few years in the field of research and a few years in the mission field, generally unlikely. I believe, however, the fact that my history includes work as a scientist may be the reason for my visas being granted to live and work in two of the world’s most devout Muslim societies, Pakistan and Iran.

As was our usual plan of travel we were to stop along the way and visit mission points. This was intended to give them a visit from those “fresh from home,” and to provide us with knowledge of our future work from other missionaries. Additionally, it helped ease us from one culture to another.

On this long journey we made short stops in San Francisco and Honolulu before reaching Hong Kong, where we were met by a Chinese church member and preacher, who took us to the apartment in an extremely tall high rise belonging to an American. The apartment overlooked Hong Kong Harbor and gave us a great view from the window down onto dozens of ships of all sizes. The American was away on leave, and graciously consented for us to live there for several days during our entire visit to Hong Kong.

From the bustle of this very Chinese city we traveled to Saigon, where we were shown that city and sights by Jim Ridgeway and Gene Conner, seasoned missionaries. They passed on to us information and encouragement that would be useful when we got to Tehran.

This was a visit typical of what we would encounter along the way. In Singapore, Gordon and Jane Hogan, who had moved to that city from Lahore, Pakistan, came to the airport and visited while we waited for our flight. They always offer substantive teaching and so they did in the few minutes we were with them on this occasion.

In Bangkok, Thailand, we saw the palace site of the filming of “The King and I.” Sylvia got so sick in Thailand on soup containing bamboo shoots and who knows what else, that I seriously wondered if I was going to lose her right there. In fact, except for the very fast-acting Lomotil and the missionary there, Loren Hollingsworth, I might indeed have lost her to a stomach virus. Thirty minutes after that little white pill went down to her stomach, she was up and ready to resume touring the city.

In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the church and missionaries were happy and encouraging. We worked in a campaign to reach people for Christ with a group from Texas — Lake Jackson, in fact, our old hometown and supporter of our work in Pakistan!

They were going into homes of Muslims and teaching the gospel of Christ. They cautioned us of the danger in doing this, and asked that we keep our activities out of the public purview, as much as possible.

The next stop in our journey to Iran was New Delhi, India, from which we drove to Agra to walk through the famous old Taj Mahal. It is majestic in Islamic design and amazes and enchants those who see it. Millions have felt this enchantment for centuries.

We worshipped with an Indian church, begun by the J.C. Choates who previously worked in Karachi, Pakistan, on our Sunday in Delhi; and I preached that evening. Indians have proved very receptive to the teaching of Jesus.

On Monday, a taxi driver named Babu drove us from Delhi to the border of Pakistan nearest Lahore Airport. Babu loved speed and horn blowing or ‘hooting,’ a word the Indians had adopted from the English over the decades of British occupation. Babu made the 350 miles in 9 ½ hours, a feat that would be considered pretty good if he had not had to dodge goats and oxcarts, and pedestrians and horses and other assorted challenges of hindrance. The exciting ride was a cultural lesson itself, considering the massive numbers of many different kinds of people.

After a two-hour struggle to get through customs on the Pakistani side of the border, we taxied to the Ambassador Hotel in downtown La-

hore. This was our home for the next four days while we visited old friends and church members we had known from eight years back when we lived there. The reacquainting and visiting and new member meeting was extremely emotionally moving.



Eric Masih, an early member in Lahore, reintroduced Don Jr. (right) to a family who had been coming to church regularly all the 8 years we had not been in Lahore. It was a family Don had led to Christ when he he was 8 years old. His school bus driver brought him home each day, and Don invited him to church often, and after a time had led them to Christ before we had left Lahore in 1966. We were all pleased to find they were still faithfully worshipping at the Siddiqi Street Church.

The chicken curry prepared for us by the wife of the longest-tenured Pakistani preacher was a taste we had missed for all the intervening years. It was Sister Ghulam Masih's own distinct flavored dish, and brought back the finest memories of good days in our mission effort among these people.

Good byes did not come easy, but we had to move on toward Tehran. Our flight from Lahore took us to Peshawar in the northwest region of Pakistan, and connected us with our planned ground transportation to Kabul, Afghanistan. We rode two cars from the airport in Peshawar to the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan, where we saw what writer, Akbar Ahmed, described in his book, **Islam Under Siege**, as "...the most rugged terrain on earth."

Mr. Ahmed went on to write that this area is the "most lawless land on earth" and that the tribal people along this border are "the toughest fighting people in the world." He cautioned every one not to "cause them

to unite against you” because of this ferocity.

We did not intend to antagonize them in any way, as we hired a small bus driver to take us through the area and over the Khyber Pass, but we failed in that intent.

Soldiers stopped us after we were inside Afghanistan and ordered us to remove every suitcase and lay them out open on the ground. We did that, and I told our son Don Jr., who was 17, with almost that many years of experience taking pictures, to get out of the taxi and take a picture. That was not a good idea, made worse by my comment, “This is funny.”

Now, that was a *really* bad idea! One of the soldiers lowered his rifle and walked toward me, gaining my undivided attention and entire respect, and said in clear English, “What is funny?”

I thought seriously for about two seconds and told my son, “Get back in the bus.”

Reluctantly, I presumed, the soldiers passed us through and let us continue our drive to Kabul.

Hassan, our jovial driver, sped away quickly, pleasing us well.

As we drove through interesting, jagged mountains and looked down on teal colored streams we felt secure with the skill of our obviously competent and experienced driver. Well...we felt ‘mostly’ secure, as we were not sure what might lie ahead behind the next curve, hidden by the rocky mountain cliffs jutting into the highways. Hassan chose whichever side of the highway he wanted to round those curves.

When we did travel through the Khyber Pass we were conscious of the fact that people holding it had never been overrun in the many battles waged there. It is a most strategic military site. It excited Sylvia as she is well read and knew of the Pass and its history.

Hassan waved and shouted to people all along the way. He seemed to know everyone, and I commented to him on that thought.

He said, “Oh, yes. They are my clients.” I wondered aloud if they rode his bus that often, but he said that he delivered to them ‘hashish’ or as he called it ‘hash.’ He tapped on his door and explained that he kept it in there to keep the officials from seeing it.

I began to wonder what we may have gotten ourselves into, and started thinking how I would tell a magistrate I did not know anything about it...especially now that I did!

While I sat in the passenger's seat in the front of the bus with the furrowed brow of a thinker, Hassan laughed aloud and raised his loose shirt. That gesture revealed a large revolver! I had no idea what kind of gun it was, but I was thinking BIG, maybe a .45 caliber. But, whatever it was, it did not lower my anxiety.

We frankly were relieved to reach Kabul with no further incidents. Hassan drove us to the Metropol Hotel and helped us unload. I paid him and thanked him, and quickly got away and up to the reception desk.

After we were comfortable in our room, I decided to take a look around. I went out on the street near the hotel and walked into an 'electrical shop.' I happened, by sheer chance, to see a letter on a desk at the shop. It had the name Aziz Amri in the return address corner! I could not believe my eyes, because *Aziz was the only Christian I knew in all of Kabul!* This shop was two doors from the hotel. Kabul is huge, yet here was a letter a few feet from our hotel bearing the name of the one man we had planned to see in Afghanistan!

I asked the proprietor if he knew him and learned that he was his brother-in-law. I asked him if we could contact Aziz, and he offered the phone. Aziz answered, and we planned to get together the next day. He seemed amazed at the way I got his phone number, as was I.

After I hung up I went back to tell Sylvia what was happening. She was pleased that we made contact, and asked when we would see Aziz. I told her we would meet him the next day, and at his suggestion, have communion with him and his family alone in his home. She was delighted with that prospect.

We decided to take a walk. as it was still early. All six of us went out and were startled, frightened even, when a man railed out at us as we walked along the sidewalk.

He recognized us as foreigners and expressed his opinion about our being in his country. He wanted us to leave, making that quite clear, but not drawing anyone else to his cause, for which we were thankful. We presumed he was mad or that he was just some kind of fanatic. We hastily moved on up the sidewalk.

We had a private worship service on Sunday with the Amri family, and we took communion prepared by Aziz's own hands.

After the service we drove up into the mountains outside Kabul and enjoyed a picnic and sweet red melons.

While we were up in the low Paghman Mountains Don Jr. typically walked away with his camera and went out of sight. The next time we saw him he was quite out of earshot and on the crest of a hill. Aziz became excited and worried, explaining there were armed sentries up there that would shoot him if they saw him with a camera.

Don returned soon without incident, and we bundled everything up for the ride back to town and a delicious meal Latifa prepared in their home.

Aziz and I discussed his work as a translator. As the only Christian family in Kabul, he and his family faced constant scrutiny and discomfort. His children were taught the Koran daily in school, Aziz was restricted in telling anyone about Christ, there was no way to meet publicly or advertise for others to know to meet with him for worship. There was no freedom of religion.

We considered having them move to Tehran where they would have more freedom, but Aziz felt that was not possible. He could have been an asset, since the language spoken in Afghanistan is Dari and is virtually the same as Farsi.

The visit with the Amris was extremely interesting and the pleasure was immense. We prayed for and with them intently, and they drove us to the hotel.

We prepared for our departure to Tehran the next day. It would be the last flight of our many days of travel. The adventure would now begin in earnest. We were prepared, tired, and eager to reach our new home. This was the flight to which we had looked forward since we embarked on the journey. We had been traveling 3 weeks, and we all were ready to have a permanent room and bed! We knew our children — all troopers for the cause of the Lord — needed to settle down.

We boarded the Iranian plane and relaxed into our seats for the flight taking us “home.”

Chapter Nine

Our Arrival in Tehran

My charge was clear: establish a congregation of the church that would survive, be self-sustaining, and one that could multiply. No other fulltime workers of our faith were in the entire country, and Americans made up a small assembly that met every Sunday night for communion, prayer, singing, preaching, and contributing to support the operation of the small congregation.

There was one Iranian man, about whom we were told. He was called “Jack,” as he had known Americans in the past, and they called him ‘Jack,’ and he liked it. He was a military officer and paratrooper in the Iranian army. Jack had been taught the gospel years before by an American working in Iran, and had accepted Christ and was baptized. He confessed Christ openly to his friends, though not on “public street corners.” He taught others in his travel throughout the country, giving them assistance with food and clothes. He was well paid in his career, so he had a heart to help the less fortunate. He was winning some over for Christ. We looked forward to meeting him.

I knew very little about Jack, having only heard his name from a preacher — Henry Pipkin — who had worked for two years with these Americans, but had left earlier in the year of 1974. He had corresponded with me before we left the U.S. and had given me the name and phone number of one Iranian girl who had expressed a strong interest in studying English and the Bible. Even as a young Muslim woman she was intrigued by the word of God and Christianity.

As we touched down at Mehrabad Airport we were expecting to be picked up by someone from among the American church members, but we did not know who. It turned out to be two ladies who were very faithful workers, Lillian Wilson, and Carol Downing.

Customs were not difficult or lengthy, and soon we were introducing ourselves to the ladies. As we talked, a well-dressed Iranian businessman walked up and introduced himself, explaining that he was a member of Lions International. This amazed us, although I had written the Tehran Lions Club of my arrival time and the purpose of our coming to Tehran. I had been a “lion” back in Texas and was advised that there was a club in Tehran should I like to transfer my membership.

We exchanged pleasantries and cards, and parted at the airport. He was prepared to drive us to our residence far across the city, but gave way to the ladies from the church. The gesture was appreciated and well remembered.

Leaving the airport we saw the huge Shayyad Monument, which contained within its massive arch shape a museum displaying many articles, documents, and pictures of the history of the Pahlavi Dynasty. This dynasty included the Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, on the throne at that time, and his father who founded the Pahlavi Dynasty in 1925.

The founder of the dynasty ruled from 1925 until 1941 when he was forced off the throne by Britain and Russia in favor of his son, the second Shah. While Mohammed Reza was ruling Iran, the Russians developed a strong desire for Iran. They needed the oil and the warm water sea ports on the Persian Gulf with access to the Arabian Sea for servicing their vast and growing fleet of ships to foster their visionary navy plans.

In 1951, the young Shah appointed European-educated Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh as prime minister, but his leadership was allowing the Tudeh (communist) Party to rapidly gain strength. The American and British governments grew more fearful that the Russian influence would become dominant in Iran and the Middle East. The two countries set about to thwart the plans Russia held for Iran by working with the Shah and the army to oust Mossadegh from power.

For two reasons Mossadegh was overthrown, to end the Russian threat and to preserve oil contracts that were in place between Iran and the West. Those two issues remained into the time we arrived in Iran in August of 1974.

We told ourselves that we would get back to see the museum as soon as we could, as we very seriously wanted to know everything we could about the Iranian culture, history and mentality. Every time we interacted with the Iranians it seemed that we had a new cultural experience.

These daily encounters soon revealed that we had chosen a land of contrast and contradiction, complication and much confusion. We sensed quickly that the nation was split, with many of the people wanting passionately to move forward into the modern world. These were for the most part the younger Iranians, while the older people detested the modern influence, preferring, rather, to stay with the old, simple life and very conservative and fundamental Islam.

The young people themselves had a confluence of ideas and ambition. Many were well read in the secular world and wanted Iran to be a nation with a western orientation. Most of them seemed to want the modern way of life, but under the strictness of Islam.

The modern secularists believed the Shah could lead them into the life they desired, but the modern Islamicists felt the Shah was taking them away from their deep beliefs of Islam. The former accepted the concept of a partnership with America and the West, but the latter believed Iran should be independent of the West and felt strongly that they should be identified more closely with the Middle East and the Islamic nations.

The young secularists were in a minority even among the young people. The young Islamicists were a majority of the young citizens and, in addition, had the masses of the older people on their side.

The secularists wanted to remain as relatively free as the Shah was allowing. The very fact that we were allowed to enter Iran to teach Christianity revealed a bit of religious freedom that his philosophy permitted. The stricter Islamicists would remove that freedom, and any missionary would be blocked from entering Iran to teach the Bible or to evangelize.

These things we had learned in our preparation to work in Iran, and they were confirmed in our discussions, even with the ladies who took us to our new home. Other Americans agreed, and our observations of the Iranians themselves would soon validate the strong division.

Although the ride home and the arrival at the gate of the house where we would live and where the church worshipped were pleasant, we were also introduced to the dry, intense heat that was Tehran.

Our compound was in an open area off a street named Heravi. Below the kitchen windows of the large house with huge rooms and on the upper floor of two, ran a small brook. We could hear it babbling. Looking out those plate glass windows to the north rose the heavy Alborz Mountains, big and rugged and, in an odd way, comfortably protective.





The Alborz Mountain range as seen from the windows of the kitchen of the house in which we lived. Sylvia often enjoyed this view as she cooked the many meals for the family. She expressed how 'powerful' they were and that she "felt safe and protected" by the big mountain range.

The house sat away from most other houses; only one across the rocky drive and one to the left were close. The kitchen had an overhang jutting out sort of over a stream, where a shepherd brought his flock of sheep every day to drink. He usually propped himself up under the overhang and watched his sheep. They often came to him for some kind of consolation. He would rub their ears and say something to them that seemed to soothe them, and they would walk away. When they had their fill he would walk away and they would follow. He often sang or just talked as they followed his lead. Those things made Sylvia think of the way elders gently oversee the members of the church.

The flock included sheep and goats, but in this picture the sheep have been shorn and appear as goats. Coming to the stream to drink was a daily routine, and allowed us to study a shepherd and his flock. We saw why Jesus chose sheep to represent the people of God. They need a shepherd, and they will follow him because of his care and kind, gentle way with them. He protects them and provides the necessities of living, including nourishment.



The first floor of our house was just below ground

level with windows out of which we would see the legs of people as they came up the walk. This bottom floor was converted to a large room for the church meeting place. On this second story there were seven rooms including a very large master bedroom at the back, the good size kitchen, a small office area, and sitting areas throughout the house. When our furniture arrived it would be a comfortable, if loud, house with terrazzo floors. It was bright with many windows, a flat roof upon which we could sit, though we really never did sit out on the roof.

Our American church members were generally families with at least one of the members working in American companies assisting the people of Iran at the invitation of the Shah of Iran. The remuneration was usually quite good, and the American Christians were able to be of great assistance in projects to help the poor of the church and others.

Some of the membership, which numbered about 70, taught or had work within the companies. They had vacation times, and made tours of various kinds to other countries, like Russia, which was a border neighbor to the north. Many trips inside Iran were made in tour groups composed of Americans, Iranians and ex-patriates of other countries.

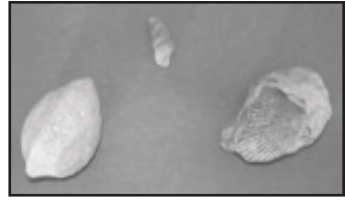
A popular tour was by camel caravan into deserts or even up pathways and chosen routes into the Alborz Mountains. These tours were for the more adventurous ones, which were rather numerous among our members. One lady, the daughter



of an American worker, chose to make a tour up into the mountains with a caravan of camels, on which were mounted people who were riding for the very first time. The drivers were patient and managed the trained camels very well.

On that particular tour our member rode well and had experiences to write about. She found fossilized *sea shells* up in the 4,200 foot moun-

tains north of Tehran! She brought them back to show us and to share with us. That meant the worldwide flood to us...Noah? She knew I would like to have them and would use them, teaching about the flood of Genesis six.



It was not uncommon to have a caravan of camels driven right in front of our compound. They would usually be carrying some commodity to be delivered to the merchants at a bazaar or store in town. Sometimes they offered rides on the spot for a small fee, and sometimes they would set up a ride for those wanting to make a tour.

In the front yard of the compound where we lived and where the church met was a small, very cold, swimming pool. Although, the August temperatures were extremely hot, the water was cold because it was pumped from far below the ground. Even four days after the pool was filled it remained cold, but so refreshing.

The church members owned a 1951 Jeep Utility Wagon, 4-door hard top. It was large and heavy, black with cream-colored top. It was high and the driver sat quite a way up above the average standard car driver. It was just what a person needed to drive the streets of Tehran, where traffic was erratic and chaotic. My understanding of the ‘unwritten’ traffic rules was simply “whatever you want to do, do it.”



There were two problems with the Jeep UW: it had no power and sometimes it would not start. Often we had to unload and push the Jeep over the crest of the steeper grades on slow streets. I parked it outside the gate of our compound where

there was a small down hill grade. Since it was equipped with a stick shift,

I could get it to start if I let it roll down that grade toward the street about 200 feet from our property, in gear with the clutch depressed, and when it had enough speed to turn over the engine, let the clutch out quickly. That maneuver became a morning routine when we went out anywhere in the Jeep.

The Willis Utility Wagon in the picture sits across the stream from the house. From two of the rooms there were balconies where we could sit and view the mountains, the stream, the street, other homes further away. The scenes were beautiful during the winter months when the snow fell. The children would slide down the banks of the stream on inner tubes or card board or even sleds that some of the other children of the neighborhood would bring to the fun time. The vehicle provided transportation for us to do our work all over town, and on the highways to other parts of the country.

We drove that Jeep anywhere and everywhere in town as we located markets, post office, or shops where we conduct our daily business. We found the Tehran American School campuses. The high school was located on Saltanatabad Street a mile south of our Heravi Street turn-off and back down toward the city, while the middle school was situated in Lavizan, further out Heravi Street to the northeast of our house. Our children would make daily rides on school buses to and from these sites, Don and Diana to high school, and Beth and Robin to the middle school campus, which also housed the elementary grades.

The TAS high school was just north of an area called Seyyed Khan Dahn, where several major streets came together in a six-point intersection. Most things we did required us to go down ‘Khiabani’ Saltanatabad, which joined another large and important street ‘Khiabani’ Pahlavi. Both of these streets ran from the foothills of the Alborz Mountains south toward downtown Tehran. Celebrations, parades, marches and even protests were held in this intersection of Seyyed Khan Dahn. It was large, and thousands of people could gather in these streets.

In the entire Tehran American School system there were 3,000 students. If a student held an American passport and could pay \$150 each month, he or she could attend TAS. Many Iranians met these requirements.

The American flag could fly within the compounds of the school campuses, but it was illegal to have a flag outside at one’s residence or business. At other official U.S. sites the flag could fly.

Patriotism, and religious displays as well, could more wisely and

discreetly be shown behind walls and within homes, but not in public on the streets or on vehicles.

We were guests in a foreign land, and we did our best to follow their rules and laws. It was not only a matter of courtesy and respect, but it was *the law* and there was consequent danger if we did not abide by them.

The ‘weekend’ in an Islamic state is usually Thursday and Friday, since Friday is the day of prayer when practicing Muslims attend the services at the mosque. There they hear lessons from the Koran and they pray.

In addition, through the week they pray five times each day, taking a break from work to bow low to the ground and recite their prayers. The Shiite Muslims, the sect of Islam predominant in Iran, kneel on carpets and lean forward, placing their foreheads on a prayer stone they call Muhr, which is made from mud to separate themselves from unnatural surfaces and to pray in absolute purity. They give at least token alms to the many beggars, and they fast during designated holy days.

The Muslim, in order to complete his obedient service to Allah, at least once in his lifetime makes a trip to Mecca, in Saudi Arabia, at a time called Ramadan. This journey is termed the Haj and the one making the journey upon completing it is called Haji, a title they wear proudly.

These clearly-defined tenets of worship and obedience are accomplished by many traditions and other forms of obeisance, such as sacrificing animals — most often sheep — at designated times and specific events. New homes and new cars are often dedicated with blood of a sacrifice. Usually some of the meat of a sacrifice is given to the poor.

Our own worship in Tehran was conducted on Sunday night, since everyone — including all foreign workers — had to be on their jobs on Sunday mornings. The church assembled in a very large downstairs room of our compound. We sang, prayed, took communion, took up a collection of a financial offering, and had a sermon preached. Any man that had a message could ask to speak and be given that opportunity, but I usually did that until I got a few Iranians meeting for worship in another location.

Our young son, Don, was committed to trying to bring people in to worship and learn the Bible, though he did not intend to preach or attend college to learn to preach. His interest was in photography and languages. He used the Farsi language in Tehran more quickly than any of us did. Both he and his sister received honors in the Farsi classes at Tehran American School. He did the photography for the school newspaper and annual.



In the picture to the left he is preaching at the Tehran Church of Christ. The talk was remarkably good.

I spent the week trying to find people interested in learning about Christ and studying the Bible. This proved not to be easy, but some few did step forward to courageously study more or less secretly, with the ever-present fear of family repercussions. These 'punishments' could be quite drastic, as we learned in time.

Our arrival and introductions to all the new things of this really exotic culture went relatively well and without incident. We wished and prayed that the good fortune would continue, knowing quite well it was not likely to remain so serene. Soon we would know how severe the Muslim law truly was.

Chapter Ten

Tehran Christians Learn Sad Truths of Islam

Islam was established in a violent time through a rough, hard man of the desert, Mohammed. History written about Mohammed reveals that he was a passionate leader of men who were willing to plunder, rape, capture, steal, and kill to make gain and win followers. Stories change over time, and the truth of those days will not ever be completely known.

What is known, however, is that from the early part of the 600s A.D. when Mohammed claimed to have received visions from Allah to record his will, he was making slow progress in winning people to his new religion through teaching, so he turned to violence. It is believed by historians that the force he used coerced people to accept the tenets of Islam and to confess Allah as God, on pain of death. As a result of the sword, Islam spread rapidly across the deserts, into even the jungles of Africa, to Asia, and on to Europe.

Mohammed had mercy on some of the small and weak in his conquests of many tribes and lands, rulers and governments. His life conformed to the words he had written as a revelation from Allah, using the skill of his friend Abu Bakr, who actually did the physical writing of the “revelations.” The assembly of all these writings of Mohammed’s visions became the Koran. It was written in Arabic, and the Muslims claim it can be thoroughly understood only by those who know Arabic fluently.

The writings of the Koran regarding jihad are misunderstood in many ways. It is like the command Jesus gave to His followers in that it is a charge to spread the religion to the entire world. Jihad in one dimension commands an attack on evil. The Muslims interpret the severity of these attacks in different ways.

It is not totally possible for the western mind to clearly understand the way a Muslim can kill another human in cold blood without seeing it as murder. When one in America murders another it is considered a crime and punishable severely. The Muslim does not see killing an ‘infidel’ as murder; rather, he considers that as eliminating evil. The purpose is to help “purify” the entire world by converting every human to Islam. In order to fulfill that charge, every Muslim is expected to participate. Some will act with the most extreme violence, while others will support terrorism

financially. Some will protect or harbor terrorists in their home or help them hide.

Some Muslims will support the active jihadists with words or by writing, by praying to Allah on his behalf. Many Muslims around the world celebrate at the successes of jihad. At the very least, virtually every Muslim sees success of the jihad in any form as a gain for Allah, and has that feeling in his or her heart.

Who can forget the scenes of Palestinians dancing in their streets as the news of Nine-Eleven reached them? There is delight deep down in the hearts of devout Muslims when the “evil” of the west, specifically America and Britain, are hit by the ones outwardly and actively pursuing the ‘conquest’ of the entire world for Allah. There is no guilt in the mind of the bombers when they kill people, because they honestly believe they are acting under the direction of Allah, and that their actions are pleasing to him. They believe they are carrying out a divine mandate and that they, some of them, are divinely called to die in the cause to set examples to others to be totally and wholly committed.

Little victories are successes. Even when an Iranian can get more money than is fair in a transaction with an American it is a small strike in favor of Islam. If a landlord can get a slightly higher rent than he should when renting an apartment to a Westerner, he believes Allah is pleased for two reasons. First, he takes something away from the evil being, and he believes he will use his ill-gotten gain better in his life for he is living to please Allah. He has no conscience when it comes to cheating a westerner, an infidel, at any level of life, whether it is selling him a trinket or car or house or land. Likewise, an Islamic country sees it not only as “not wrong” but also as a “great right” to take land from infidels, such as the Jews and all other non-Muslims.

Killing is included in the Jewish Ten Commandments as one serious thing Jehovah God forbade. But it is not so in Islam. The Koran does not make such an act a sin.

Mohammed lived by the sword. The Muslim believes his life was the example for them to live, that Allah selected Mohammed to reveal his word because he saw Mohammed as the right kind of man living the way that was required to spread the message of Islam. Logically, then, they are convinced that if Allah approved of Mohammed’s life he will approve of their life when they live as he lived.

These things were important for us to have in our understanding as we lived in Tehran and as we carried out our work teaching the Iranians

about the Jewish history, Jesus Christ, and the beginning and spread of His church.

We had no idea it would be so difficult to get to teaching situations with Muslims, but given the things I have written above, it should have been no surprise to us. When a Muslim converts to Christianity he or she takes on that infidelic evil and ‘should be put to death,’ so thinks the devout Muslim. Further on in our time in Tehran we began to see how deeply and how seriously that fact was believed.

We made slow progress as we tried to reach the Iranians with our message. We were compelled by the major command of Jesus near the end of His life on earth, ***“Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always to the end of the world.”***

Nowhere did Jesus tell us to kill the prospect if he did not convert. That is one major distinction in our carrying out the great commission “to teach,” and the global jihad to “conquer.”

In my work I spent a lot of time on the streets, in the shops and stores, at offices and homes of the Muslims of Tehran. I sought any who would listen, and I invited many to worship meetings and to Bible studies. I asked many if I could study in their home or at any designated place.

Usually I was out visiting or trying to meet people or do things, but on occasions I would just back away from the work and let things “catch up.” About one day each week I would stay in my office studying or meditating, reading or planning, and often praying for Iran and her people, and sometimes for some particular individual.

On such occasions the mail might arrive with a letter from someone interested in knowing about Christianity, or the phone would ring with an humble request for a study. Occasionally, a visitor would come to the door, usually with a church member, asking how to obey Christ.

One day one of our members brought in a pretty fourteen-year-old girl from a suburban village. She had been taught the gospel of Jesus, how He lived, died, was buried and arose to live forevermore. She understood that He had invited us to come to Him and live in heaven with Him for eternity. She wanted that, like so many, because her life on earth was hard.

We welcomed her in and we talked. She believed in Christ as the Son of God, she confessed her faith in the Lord as our Savior, and wanted

to be immersed into his body, His church, for the remission of her sins. I asked her if she knew the consequences of being a Christian among the Muslims in her village, and she said she did.

The church had secured a large rectangle-shaped tank made from stainless steel and painted blue to use as a baptistery. It was about four feet high, four feet wide, and eight feet long. It would easily hold the one doing the baptizing and the one being immersed.

The young lady, the wife of an older village man who was not aware at this time of what his wife was doing, donned the very modest baptismal garment covering her entire body except for her face and hands. Sylvia and the older Christian woman, who taught her about Jesus and brought her to us for baptism, assisted her.

I stepped down into the baptistery and the ladies helped the young woman into the water. The water was cool and momentarily took her breath away. I gave her a minute to catch her breath, and she looked up at me with a pleasant smile. I asked her if she would confess her faith in Jesus before those of us gathered as witnesses. Through the interpretation of the lady, Mary Zaya, who had brought her, she said, "Yes."

I asked her to repeat my words if she believed them, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." When she was told what I said, she repeated them in Farsi.

Her immersion was proper, as I lowered her body completely under the water, and I raised her back upright. Normally, in America, we would embrace as I congratulated the new Christian; but in this culture I felt it best not to make that much physical contact. I did however help her as she ascended the step out of the baptistery, by holding her hand and supporting her back.

Mary Zaya had brought family members to be baptized after studying with them. The young married Muslim girl had studied with her. Mary taught her the way, and the girl wanted to be baptized. She knew the possible consequences could be death because she left the Muslim faith. She was baptized anyway.

Christians believe angels rejoice when the act just finished is performed because one more is added to the number of people being saved. Thus, we felt that the hosts in heaven welcomed this new 'child' of God. As well, it was a happy day in her tender heart, and she and Mary went on their way rejoicing.



Mary returned to me soon after in extreme sadness and a high emotional state. She told me through tears and cries of anguish that the young lady had returned to her village and had told her husband she was a Christian. Without discussion, before the entire village, he stabbed his young wife, doused her with kerosene and put a match to her, burning her to death, with the approval of the villagers looking on.

I sat down and felt horror throughout my entire being. My only thought and prayer was that hers was a sincere and honest conversion and that she truly would be with God in heaven. I think of the precious expression as she confessed her Savior, and I do pray that our Lord sees her darling little face lovingly, and that these days she can look up to Him with a big smile.

This event more clearly defined our task in Tehran. It changed my approach to the people. I became considerably more dedicated to my work, but I did maintain a lower profile and a quieter presence.

Chapter Eleven

Surprising Results of the Conversion of Shafiq

The news of the killing of our young wife convert by her devoutly Muslim husband spread rapidly through our church members, both Americans and Iranians. We believed that it would cause others to be very slow to come to learn of Christ, and that some might even quit attending our service entirely.

We were happily surprised to observe that attendance and interest did not diminish at all. In fact, in one woman quite the opposite happened.

For ten months I had been studying the Bible with a Muslim woman by the name of Shafiq. She was brought to me to study by Mary Zaya, the older lady living in a middle class area near downtown Tehran who had brought the 14 year-old wife whose conversion led to her being killed by her husband.

Shafiq knew about this young lady and her fate, but she continued to study with Mary and me. Mary was her closest friend and had been for many years. They lived near each other, and got together often for tea and conversation. Mary was an Armenian, who had come to Iran from Russia when she was a young woman in her twenties. Shafiq was an Arabian woman who came to Tehran from Egypt when she married her Iranian husband, Ali, a devout Muslim.

Mary had a grown son, Bill, who lived with her, and Shafiq had children, the oldest being her son also named Ali, like his father. The two women had many things in common, but Mary wanted Shafiq to be a Christian, so they could be ‘sisters,’ she explained.

Shafiq had not been very interested in Christianity, as she had observed it. She had noted among the priests in the churches excessive opulence and extravagance in the midst of poverty and desperate need. She could not get that to add up, especially in light of the fact that Muslims were required to give alms to help the poor.

Both women were impressed with the approach we had as we worked to teach and help the people. We gave to the people things they needed, such as food and clothing whenever we could. The American church members were good that way. We had between 50 and 70 Ameri-

cans that worshipped with us and they gave to the cause of reaching the Iranians. Where there was a need they would collect money and help with it. Some would buy almost anything we could put to use in our work and give it to us.

When it came to feeding the poor everyone pitched in to help. Several would donate food and clothes, and both American and Iranian would help load up the Jeep to take the things to some poor village, usually south of Tehran or on the southern suburbs. The jeep in the picture is being loaded up for such a trip.



To Mary, as a Christian, this was a “Christ-like” thing to do, helping the poor. To Shafiq as a Muslim this also was impressive: the willing benevolence demonstrated in giving to the needs of others was considered to be a key part of a Muslim’s obedience to Allah. In general, good people help the poor.

The facts that we were driving a 23 year old Jeep, living in a modest home, wearing clothes that in no way reflected any ostentation, and were willing to go to the poorest parts of Tehran to help people with their lives, caused an attraction with these two very honest and sincere women. Mary was instrumental in influencing Shafiq to learn about Christ, which she had tried to do for years.

The ten months Shafiq had studied with me gave her some fairly good understanding of the Bible, Old and New Testaments. Mary translated my words from English to Farsi for her. Her translation was a little shaky, I began to realize the more I studied Farsi.

When I told the story of the ten virgins, where five were prepared and five were not, it came out of Mary as seven were prepared and three were not. I questioned her and she said, “Oh, Brother, it is not important.” It made me wonder what all Mary had decided was and was not important as she gave my words to our listeners. I concluded that Mary simply favored the good, so she just said seven of the ten were good. Oh, well, as the Iranians would say, “Mohem neest,” it is not important....at least, it is not now.

One Sunday, Mary and I had arranged to take a load of food and clothing to a poor village in South Tehran to a little settlement called Rey. Mary assured me that she knew some there and that they were in dire need and would welcome us. She felt we would be able to sit with some and “tell them about Jesus.”

The Americans had rallied to this effort and had supplied money to load the Jeep with boxes of clothes and food, such as oil, rice, and other staple foods. My daughters helped me put enough of these items in the back of the Jeep to fill up the entire cargo area. We were taking generous amounts of aid to these people, and we felt very good doing it.

I picked up Mary at her house at the appointed time, and she said, “Brother, I think Shafiqah might like to go with us. I will call her.” Mary was a worker and my friend, sister and close advisor. I usually went with her judgment in the culture of her home. She called.

Shafiqah was happy to go, so we drove around the block and picked her up. While Mary was a woman tried and tested showing signs of a tough stressful life behind an engaging, almost mischievous, smile, Shafiqah was a pretty woman, charming with no stress lines in her face.

As the only wife of a good, hard-working man who earned nice wages, she was able to maintain a modest air of dignity. Shafiqah wore her clothes well and always looked appropriate. This day she wore a plain, common dress, again appropriate for the people of the village.

She climbed up into the Jeep and appeared quite pleased to be going with us. She and Mary conversed gleefully as I was left pretty well to my own thoughts except for an occasional order from Mary, “Dawsti rawst,” turn right! or “Mostageem,” straight ahead.

Along with all Mary’s other self-imposed “duties” in the work, she told Sylvia that she would clean the church room and our house, and she would teach me Farsi. Thus, she took every opportunity to use Farsi

words I was supposed to know. She did indeed help me in my work. This mission of mercy was one of her typical functions to reach the lost. Mary was a good woman, and I believe completely that she was there by God's wisdom to assist in the work we were committed to doing.

As we reached our destination, having again survived the always-treacherous drive through the city of Tehran, Mary pointed to a place for me to stop and park the Jeep.

I noted the village made of an Asian form of stucco, sandy mud clay and cattle dung. The tawny-colored, one-room huts were aligned in a square around a common central area. Several of the women worked over something in the open area, while others were literally kneading fresh dung into flat 'patties' for fuel in an outside fire for cooking. The wet patties were stuck on the sides of their hovels, to be dried by the sun.

The stopping of the Jeep at the edge of the village caught everyone's attention. Loud shouts of the women started a rush of all of them toward us. Mary began to explain who we were and why we were there, as I lowered the door on the back of the Jeep. Shafiqa stood ready to hand out the goods.

I don't know exactly what happened next, but as we began to sort out the clothes and supplies to ensure that everyone got an equal share, we were literally overrun. The women pushed their way to the back of the Jeep, shoving all of us aside. The scramble to grab everything took less than two minutes. The women clamored to get what they wanted and struggled with each other to lay claim. I was big-eyed with all that was going on, not to mention astounded and stunned.

The mission we envisioned as a nice occasion, one for which these villagers would be so grateful that they would invite us to sit and talk with them about the Lord, had turned into chaos. It quickly became unmanageable for us, and we stood aside, merely observing as spectators.

When the Jeep was emptied and the women had all run into their respective homes with their treasures, we caught ourselves standing with our hands more or less in a gesture of questioning, our mouths open, and speechless, a rare situation, especially for Mary.

We could only look at each other. We all had 'dung-mud' on our clothes and hands, even smears on our faces. Shafiqa had the largest smear across her cheek, and her tousled hair fell over one side of her forehead. As she gathered herself, she blew that lock of hair back with a puff of air

from one corner of her mouth.

Mary pushed her hair from her face with the back of her hand. I looked on in wonder as we just stood there silent and almost in shock for long moments. Then, a funny thing happened. We all burst out into laughter. We pointed out on each other the many places where we had gotten smudged by mud, and began inspecting each other for cuts or tears or other smudges. Content that we were all still in one piece, and suffering no casualties, we turned to look inside the Jeep.

Shafiqa discovered a long, four-finger smear of mud on the inside ceiling of the Jeep. She pointed it out and we all laughed aloud. We glanced back into the village, and the women were in a gaggle, apparently chattering about the experience. Presumably they were sharing their versions of what had just happened, and comparing the totally unexpected clothes with which they had been blessed.

We were dismayed at what we considered to have been a failed mission; I wrote it up as a culture experience. We all knew people would enjoy and use what we took to them on this highly interesting Sunday, but we could not measure how much closer we brought them to Christ, if any at all. With mixed emotions we drove away and actually talked cheerily and humorously in our defeat all the way to the homes of these two good ladies, with whom I would gladly share other efforts to please God.

Little did I know, as Shafiqa stepped down from the Jeep at her apartment, that she had been deeply touched by this effort to help the needy. She was armed with a knowledge of the Lord from the Bible studies the three of us had had together many times. Now, she had seen us translate those words into real, down-to-earth practice of Christianity. She was moved, moved in her heart. Two days later, Mary telephoned me to say, "Shafiqa wants to be baptized. She wants to be a Christian." I told her to bring her to the building and I would start filling the baptistry.

When they arrived, I took her confession and immersed her. Sylvia prepared a spread of fruits and sweets and we sat at the table with a new Christian woman, our sister Shafiqa. Heavy on my mind was what had happened to the 14 year-old convert who died for accepting Christ into her life. Now, here was Shafiqa in the same position, with a Muslim husband who did not know she had accepted the Lord. "What," I fearfully asked myself, "will the man do to Shafiqa?"

I quietly asked Mary when Shafiqa was not near enough to hear me, what her husband might do. She said, "Shafiqa will choose her time

to tell him.” We both breathed a sigh, and I thought a quick prayer, as I know Mary did. We all embraced as the two ladies departed. Sylvia and I wondered about her fate; what would it be in this land where men killed women with no repercussions? It wasn’t but a few days until we learned.



For many years before our family arrived in Tehran to preach Christ to as many as would hear, Mary and Shafiqah had been friends. They did everything together, but Mary wanted Shafiqah to be a Christian. She taught her and tried to live a Christian life before her, and even tried to get her to go to a protestant church with her. All her efforts were to no avail, but she never gave up. Finally, it all came together with our trip to Rey to try to help and teach the poor people of that village. Shafiqah recalled all those things Mary had taught her, and only converted when she saw Christians living the life they taught.

Mary came to clean the church building, but was more excited first to tell us, over tea, that Shafiqah had told her husband of her conversion to Christianity. She explained it this way.

Shafiqah was cleaning the house before her husband came home. She placed her Bible on a coffee table before the chair where she knew her husband would sit and read the daily newspaper. It had a light layer of dust, which one day’s collection had left. She did not clean it at that time.

As the time came for him to come home, Shafiqa's heart pounded and her blood coursed through her body, as it had never done before. She had God, no doubt, watching this development. She greeted him as usual and went about her work in another room. She knew when he sat in his chair it would not be long...and the call came.

“Shafiq! What is the meaning of this Bible on the table?”

She walked in and he was standing, pointing at her black Bible. “Why is this Bible here?”

Shafiqa stood before her man. Her head was slightly bowed in respect and humility, honoring her husband. She said softly, “I know you to be a good man. You are a good husband and a good father to our children.”

She was well aware of the 14 year-old wife, and she knew Muslim law. She also knew she had to confess to her husband what she had done.

“I want to continue to be your loyal and faithful wife...but...I have become a Christian.” She now stood confident and prepared for what he would do; her head remained lowered. “Do as you will.”

He was without words and remained silent still as he slowly lowered his head and looked long at the floor. There was an unsettling pause as Shafiqa waited to learn if she lived or if she died...or if she would be put out on the street, a divorced woman, which perhaps would be a fate worse than death.

When he raised his head, Shafiqa knew he had judged her and had made a decision. The moment was an eternity, the pressure was nearly unbearable; she waited without moving a cell or making a sound.

He said, “Your Bible needs to be dusted.” After a pause, he said, “You are a good woman, and now I know you have not only been drinking tea with Mary.”

She knew, with those words, SHE WOULD LIVE! And he kept her!

Chapter Twelve

Getting the Work Done by Iran's Orange Taxi

The conversion of Shafiq, and her husband keeping her as his wife drew prayers of thanks by Sylvia, Mary, and me. When the church was told, the American brethren also raised prayers of thanksgiving to our God.

I was invigorated in the work to a higher level than ever before. The experience of Shafiq was a big chapter in our textbook of learning. All the teaching we gave her did not, alone, convert her; rather, it took some knowledge that we practiced what we preached to win her soul. When we helped the underprivileged, Shafiq saw value in Christianity. That was information that was true in Tehran and is true all over the world. That knowledge improved our work in Iran.

Our work depended a lot on getting around. Sylvia and I were outside people, and most days we both were away from the house. While the children were in school, we shopped and visited and ate at the very few places where we felt comfortable and safe. We considered the sanitation as much as the cuisine, as best we could. There were many customs and habits we considered as we chose places to eat, and one thing in particular that many people did from which we steered away: cleaning dishes in the open, flowing 'jubes' which ran downhill from the north to the south of the city.

The jubes were man-made ditches or gutters, formed in the concrete, cut alongside most streets of the city. Many functions were performed with 'jube water.' Not only were dishes washed there, but also fruit and vegetables, clothes, and children. Men washed their cars with the jube water, which, once used, ran back into the jube and on down south. All kinds of people brushed their teeth and bathed in the jubes while wearing most of their clothes. Additionally, horses and other animals stood in, drank from, and urinated in the convenient, flowing water of the jubes.

Often seen in public were men urinating alongside street with but little to hide the activity. Even some of their urine worked its way into this side-of-the-street source of jube water. One can imagine the bacteria, disease, waste, and trash running in the drainage ditches of Tehran. It was certainly sure that the water from the mountains, collected in reservoirs

from rain, snow, and springs, originated in the north, and was ‘fresher’ and ‘cleaner’ than that in the south, miles away, after being ‘used’ by all the citizens for many, many purposes.

It was not uncommon for people to step into a jube or fall in one or even drive into one. Driving was otherwise hazardous, as well. The traffic was heavy every day on major arteries toward the downtown business areas. To one not raised and trained to drive in Tehran it could be extremely intimidating. Even my big Jeep did not alleviate a minor fear of an accident happening, because such a happening could waste a lot of time, cost money, and tie anyone up in red tape, especially Americans.

I figured out a little routine that removed a lot of my worrisome driving and the potential problems it could cause in that town of ‘intimidation on the streets.’ Because we were a mile off a main street we either had to drive or make a long walk, or hire a taxi and driver at several dollars per trip or by the day.

I did walk it a few times to get to Saltanatabad Street, where “orange taxis” were abundantly available. The orange taxi was Iran’s best answer to mass movement of people. They were cheap, fast, and very eager to take you to your destination. They sought out patrons. They flowed in major streets in an ‘orange stream’ much like the yellow streams of New York City, as one views them from atop the Empire State Building.

But, usually, I found it most convenient, efficient, and less expensive to drive my Jeep part way downtown and park at a well-known and popular intersection, site, or building. From that point I would hop an orange taxi, and remember where I parked for my return to that spot by taxi after my business or study was done. This worked well every time I did it, and I used the system almost exclusively when I was alone.

In order to flag an orange taxi it took more than raising a hand or a whistle. You had to stand on the side of the street, cautiously avoid falling into a jube, and lean into the window of an approaching taxi if he slowed down and moved toward you. As he came near you shouted your destination, giving an easy-to-understand location — place, intersection, building or known site. It was necessary to shout loudly and clearly, calling out a known destination, preferably with a Persian accent.

If the driver did not get it the first time he flashed by, it was over, you could forget it, and he drove on. There was no second chance because he would roll a few more yards and pick up a fare he could understand. This behooved one to learn how to speak the language as nearly like a

native as possible. The only reason they picked up Americans in the first place was because they paid the fare asked and sometime tipped. Money (pul) talks on those streets.

When a taxi passed you by, you knew he was not going your way, so you turned your attention to the next orange taxi. Normally, this would only be seconds later. If there were several 'would-be' riders they would line up along the side of the street and all shout as the taxi cruised by. It was common that several would 'pile in' at one time, two in the front seat and three or four small ones in the back seat. The taxis were most often crowded and snug.

If you did not know the co-passengers when you got in the orange taxi, you knew them well when you got out. A lot of talking, in Farsi, went on during the ride. Anyone could chip in and talk if he or she spoke Farsi, broken English, French (most often), or even proper English, on occasion. Usually the orange taxi driver could not, or would not, speak English. It was to his advantage if he spoke no English, as he could deny any understanding of anything, and just tell you your fare.

The tightness with which we were forced to sit was true Iranian, but very much *not* American. We prefer riding one to a taxi, sometime sharing; but in Tehran the rule on every ride was to share. With my six foot, two-inch frame I had to claim a fair portion of the seat in the taxis, which were Iran-built Peykans, about the size of the smallest Toyotas.

Sitting tightly against each other seemingly troubled no one, but there were some negative aspects for me. For one thing, nursing mothers fed their babies openly and within inches of your own body, mostly in your sight. As I had done on the train from Lahore to Karachi, Pakistan, I looked out the window a lot, especially in my early days of orange taxi riding. After awhile I just ignored them like the Iranis did, as though it was a part of my culture.

I am quite certain the orange taxis still carry men and women to and from work in much the same way to this day. Traveling is as essential now as it was when we drove so much in those days.

One long drive I made with our son, Don, was from Tehran far down south through the city of Isfahan to Shiraz. Our return was through Yazd, a center of Parsi fire worship, and Qom, hometown of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The trip was filled with adventure.

Chapter Thirteen

Cold Ride through the Deserts of Iran

The weather is severe in Iran. The summers in some deserts of the country, which is approximately three-fourths the size of Saudi Arabia, can have temperatures of 135 degrees Fahrenheit. There are often whirling winds lifting finest particles of sand thousands of feet into the air. Those same deserts dip to freezing in the cold seasons.

It was in one of those cold times that my son and I determined to drive down to see other parts of the mysterious and historically rich, ancient land. Don was to graduate the following spring and this was his last year at home before going to college back in the States. This December in 1974 was our last opportunity to travel together. The Christmas holidays from school provided enough time for us to make our exploration.

We prepared the Jeep for the long trip and gathered all we would need to take — food, medicine, warm clothing, cameras, water, lots of water for ourselves and the Jeep, which had a water leak.

When we packed in the early morning darkness for a first long day of our trek across the Persian desert, Don was sick with a very upset stomach. It was enough for me to call off the trip, but he insisted we go. He knew it would be virtually impossible to ever see these parts of Iran if we did not go at this time.

I did give in to go, but I wondered during the entire trip if it was a good idea, because we had to stop for him to rush out of the Jeep at every ‘sand dune’ for relief. In Texas we would have sought the bushes but, here, forget it. The dunes had to serve. His trooper-spirit kept us going on with optimism and even humor and enthusiasm, and we both did get numerous unique and one-of-a-kind pictures and regular 8mm silent movies.

Day one, we rolled out early and were amazed at the quietness of the city’s empty streets. Only a very rare street sweeper moved. We drove down south through Tehran and onto the two-lane highway toward Qom. Our interest was high in this town because it was the center of training for Islamic preachers, called Mullahs.

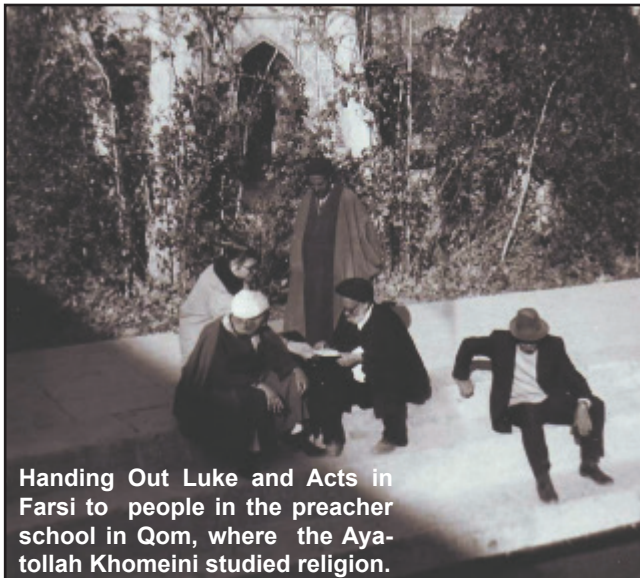
Muslims from all over the world came to study at this religious university with the Persian name Howzeh-ye-Elmish. Long before this

time a young man studied here. His name was Ruhollah Khomeini. The fundamental Shiite doctrine was taught in these halls. This was what I considered the intellectual source of Shiism.

With a feeling of unusual boldness, Don and I aimed to put the gospel into the hands of people in the school. With this in mind we got directions and drove straight to the entrance of the university. We were armed with some 200 copies of a book containing two books of the New Testament, Luke and Acts, which had been translated into the Dari language by our Afghani friend with whom we had visited in Kabul, Afghanistan, Aziz Amri. Dari is a language very close to Farsi. Some liken the comparison of Dari and Farsi to that of the English of England and American English. Dari was one of two official languages of Afghanistan, the other being Pushto.

As we entered the compound we saw older men sitting on steps around a large clean pool of water. They were not apparently in a meditative state; rather, they seemed to just be thinking. We drew very little focus as we walked to them. In fact, they remained seated as we stood before them and spoke.

We smiled as we talked to them using our heaviest Farsi accent and “deep understanding” of their language. We had decided the best thing we could do within our limits of language was to hand them the small paper book and say, “for you,” ‘Bahraye Shoma.’



Handing Out Luke and Acts in Farsi to people in the preacher school in Qom, where the Ayatollah Khomeini studied religion.

They seemed to understand us perfectly well, and smiled as they took the books. They thanked us (Kahesh Mikonam, which is a polite way of saying ‘thank you’). After they immediately looked at the book, their countenance became intent, and their scholarly curiosity became evident. They saw it was religious writing as they read into it. They looked more closely at us and with serious faces, they began to quietly say, “Kheli Mamnoon,” ‘Thank you very much.’ This phrase was the deepest ‘thank you’ they could word.

We knew we could not hold a conversation in their language intelligent enough to keep them listening to us so we did not linger. We merely gave them the book, the word of God in a language they could understand, and moved on.

The books of Luke and Acts had been selected for this first book in Farsi (Dari) because they tell the story of the birth, life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Christ, then the beginning of His church and its spread. They explain how to become a Christian and how Jesus tells us to live. This was the extent of our ability to ‘spread the word’ in that place at that time, and we did it. We passed out many books in the school and all over Qom.

I took a picture of Don handing out one to an old man on a donkey, who smiled widely as he gave it to him. We had a moment of lightness when Don returned to the car, as we wondered what must have been on the mind of the white-bearded old man as he took the book and thanked Don. He most likely could not read.



We did not spend the night in Qom, needing to move on to Isfahan where we had Christian American friends we were to meet and with whom we would stay. A mutual friend had made arrangements, and we looked forward to knowing the middle-aged couple working with Bell Helicopter International.

We enjoyed our drive as we saw new, but very old, countryside dotted with farms and small white domes of mosques on either side and in every settlement. And, there were many ‘dunes’ along the way, for which we were thankful. In Isfahan, the streets were lined with tall straight trees, all numbered with metal tags nailed into their bark. They were planted by the government under the orders of the Shah and numbered in order to keep records of their growth.

We followed instructions to the home of our friends and were welcomed with open arms and a table set with the good cooking of Fran McConnell. She and Mac had been looking for us and were concerned that we were somewhat late. When we told them what we were doing in Qom and that we had taken longer than planned passing out the books, they wondered about our ‘strategy’ in this Islamic world. “Wasn’t that dangerous?”, they wanted to know. Our answer was simply, “Well, we are here.”

We were given a tremendous night of rest and the next day a tour of the beautiful city. An artisan showed us a skill, which I had never seen before, microscopic-size writing on rice grains. We went up into a ‘pigeon tower,’ and were shown where Zoroastrians had laid human bodies for the birds to pick clean their bones instead of allowing them to decay in traditional burials.

We stood in a mosque that echoed the clap of your hands. If it did not echo at least seven times you were not considered pure, and the more echoes it made the purer you were believed to be. I am not sure how many times my echo came back to me, but it exceeded seven. I am pure.

We saw an ancient palace and a bazaar with a bevy of craftsmen, from textile workers to copper smiths. It was a source of supplies for locals and handicrafts for tourists. Our purchases were minimal, as we ran into some tough bargaining. Not knowing much about that aspect, we walked away from some purchases we would liked to have made.

Back at the home of our hosts we discussed the church and the closing down of a place they had prepared for worship. The authorities told them they could not ever again assemble in the particular ‘house,’ because they had neglected to get a permit to use the place for meetings.

Early in the morning we left Isfahan and drove on toward Shiraz, across the seemingly unending bleakness of cold sand. Our next objective was to reach and tour the ancient city conquered in 331 BC by Alexander, the Great — Persepolis — city of Pars.

Before reaching Persepolis we were able to see the tomb of Cyrus, the Great, king of Persia, and instrument of God, who had made a way for the Jews to return to Jerusalem from exile in Babylonia. An austere stone mausoleum stood silent and alone on the desert, impressive because of the power of the king whose body lay inside.



Tomb of Cyrus, the Great, king of Persia, 2600 years ago.

From there, we drove to Persepolis where the ruins were instantly observed to be magnificent, preserved through the years because of the arid desert and the fact that no industry had invaded to modernize or civilize the area. The foundations and many walls of the ancient city remained



standing where they were over 2500 years ago. A palace prepared for Esther by King Ahaseurus, another biblical king, stood roofless within the city.

The library of clay tablets and cuttings

on stone was still viewable as a library, and although all the books had been removed the building contained the accounts of the King of Persia and of Persian history. Some of the remains of these clay tablets were taken to the Chicago museum for study and storage, and often they are displayed.

We filmed and photographed and admired, but soon we rolled on to Shiraz. This city was inhabited in years past by great poets of Persia, Saadi and Ferdowsi, both of whom are revered by Iranians, who study their work in school even until this day.

Visits to American church members in Shiraz led to discussions of Islam and its restrictions on religious freedom. We were shown the city by our friends, seeing most notably the elegantly designed 'mosque of mirrors' and the beautiful rose gardens lined with orange trees.

Following this intense but brief visit, Don and I bade the Christians farewell and began our return to Tehran. We took a brief side trip to the city of Yazd where a fire temple stood with an 'eternal flame' burning. The Parsis did not consider us pure; therefore, we were denied entry to the temple, but we saw portions of it where Ahura Mazda, the principal god of the Zoroastrians, was worshiped.

We had been able, during our long drive, to distribute most of our books of Luke-Acts and had learned much more about this somewhat backward, and at the same time somewhat modern, but ever exciting and unique land and its people.

Later in life both Don and I would be able to look back on this week as one of the best he and I ever had together. As we drew near the huge city of Tehran, Don was feeling great, and we both were ready and very eager to see the four girls we had left at home. Judging by their greetings, the feeling seemed mutual.

Chapter Fourteen

Teaching Calculus and the Bible in Tehran

Tehran American School had built a good reputation among Americans and Iranians over the years of its existence to support the work of the thousands of Americans brought in by the Shah. All the work done by these people from as early as the 1950s had moved Iran close to the west in theory and politically, but in the minds of the fundamental Muslims, the closeness was deeply resented. They preferred not having the modernization and the western influence in their lives. The men primarily wanted the old ways of life and religion, while the women had no choice but to accept whatever came.

The American school (T.A.S.) provided an education, which qualified the students for the universities of America and any other Western nation. I was honored with an invitation from one of the teachers to see the school administration about teaching mathematics, as the school was short an instructor. The lady attended worship with us, and taught English at T.A.S. She asked me if I would be interested in teaching math since that and chemistry were my majors in college. Having foreseen this possibility before going to Tehran and having the idea pre-approved by my sponsoring and overseeing church in Texas, I was able to apply for the post right away.

The school hired me virtually on the spot, and I began in the 1974 – 1975 school year. I taught three classes of 10th grade math and one senior calculus class. The three advanced students of math knew as much about the subject as I did, so we made an arrangement. Each day I assigned 3 difficult problems for homework for the three brilliant young men. The next day in class each student put one problem on the board and explained it. That is the way we got through the course, and everyone learned!

While these courses required a lot of time, we felt it was justified, as we got into contact with many Americans to whom my ministry extended. I sensed right after arriving in Iran that my work would be divided between the Americans and the Iranians, to whom I actually felt I was sent. But, how does one ignore his fellow countrymen who are in a strange, mystic, foreign land, and in trouble? We spent time with the Americans,

and we believe we were able to offer something to them that they needed and could not get from their companies or colleagues.

We never regretted the time we devoted to helping the Americans in Iran, as there was much desperation in some of the homes. It might be said there were a number of ‘desperate housewives’ and bewildered husbands. I fixed whatever I could.

Not only was I in the homes of Americans, I slowly began penetrating homes of Iranians. One family in which I took a particular interest included several daughters and one son, all of school age and just beyond.

The oldest daughter, Effie, and I became good friends when she invited me to come to her family’s home and study English from the book of John in an English version. The first visit I made was on a snowy October day. It was a slick drive to her house, some 3 or 4 miles from mine. I was a bit late, but I did arrive to her “surprise,” she told me.

As is the Iranian custom we had fruit and sweets and tea as we talked at length before we began to study. I met her family and learned they were landowners and were more than middle class, financially. The father also ran a successful flower shop. All the children were planning to attend university and become professionals.

Effie was the oldest girl and was responsible for helping to get the others through school. She was a Muslim of the most traditional fashion, but she had some modern ideas from her reading and talking with foreigners from the west.

Her brother, Ahmad, was just younger than she and had visions of immigrating to the U.S. and soon. He wanted to join an uncle there and become a citizen. Effie did not say she had the same desire, but I believe it was a growing dream in her heart.

We studied the book of John, and I had her read and then explain the meaning of the English words she had read. She was doing two things at once, learning more English and learning the meaning of these words of God.

As we studied, her mother kept preparing fresh and nice things in the kitchen. One of the sisters would bring out a new delicacy for me to sample. The warmth of the home surrounded me. The Muslim hospitality was being practiced right before me, and I wondered if all this friendliness was the personality of this one family, or was it Persian, or was it Muslim? I did not know, but it was captivating.

Another daughter would sit with us on occasions, but usually only briefly. She was a teenager and her name was Shawnee. Her alert eyes often trapped my gaze; they were green. The typical Iranian had dark brown eyes, beautiful, but not green. Shawnee's eyes had something behind them, a story, a hope, a sad longing. She and Effie, together, made a pretty sight. Effie's English accent was good; Shawnee's was not as proficient, but she spoke up, just not very often.

The studies continued with Effie. Many times I met with her, and we talked of the culture of Iran, the Koran, the Bible, Texas, America, and our respective lives. She became not only a good student, but a dear friend. However, we seemed no closer to wanting to become a part of the Lord's church after six months than she was on my first visit in the winter.

Her family invited my family into their home to eat, and we reciprocated, but invitation after invitation to worship with us as we assembled on Sundays were declined.

On two or three church youth trips Effie and Shawnee came, but that was about all the contact we made outside of studies in their home. Effie's progress in English was good, but Shawnee did not come in enough to learn much. The entire family was a delight. The mother and one other sister in particular meticulously kept their coverings, chador or scarves, on and in place when I was there, but Effie and Shawnee accepted my presence well enough not to feel compelled to wear the very modest coverings. They looked more western in the clothes they wore inside their home.

As was the Iranian custom I always took something on my visits at the beginning, but in time it was not expected. I was not sure just when to stop, but I believe I was accepted well enough by the family when I did make up my mind to come not 'bearing gifts.' We all dispensed with what was termed in Farsi, "tarof," a sort of social tradition that served to be nice on the surface, with a deeper sincerity to come later.

Chapter Fifteen

Empty Chair at Our Table

Family life in Tehran is a very strong part of the culture. Decisions are made after much intense and lengthy discussion within the close family. Even small decisions require input from many family members. Everyone's opinion is valued, thus bringing to bear the knowledge and wisdom of probably three of four generations, all those in the household.

Outsiders' opinions are not as important as those 'within the walls' of the family. This expression is rendered in the 'bagh,' or 'in the park,' with reference to the park-like flowers and plants and gardens around the house and inside the wall of the dwelling. These seven- or eight-foot solid walls around a house are to give privacy to the family, block any vision in or out, stop animals from wandering in from the outside, and keep unwanted visitors away.

At the gate there is a bell or buzzer, a tone of some kind, to announce a visitor or guest or messenger. A speaker system is turned on from the inside so that the visitor can announce himself and his business. If the resident permits entrance, the gate can usually be unlocked electrically from the inside, and the one at the gate is allowed in.

Inside the gate the scene is pleasant and usually cooler than the outside due to a pool or a running fountain or even a mist of water being sprayed into the mini-bagh (park). Within the wall one is in the park.

Taking that expression, one is in the 'bagh' when his opinion is of value to the family. When the person is 'in the bagh' it means he has been accepted into the real family relationship, and almost privy to the family secrets and problems. 'Tarof' (the formal hospitality) is no longer necessary, and the members of the family become more relaxed and casual in his presence. The formalities are basically dropped, and even the ladies of the household may not feel bound to wear their scarves, chadors, or the complete covering as required outside their walls, and in the presence of strangers or even guests of lesser acquaintance.

Sometimes 'in-laws' have to prove themselves over lengthy periods of time in order to be accepted into the bagh. If they prove to be good people, respecting family customs and traditions, and if they show wisdom and good judgment, and work well, contributing to family activities, their opinion will even be requested. In time they are fully integrated as a respected family member.

The family works together to make things run smoothly. Older children help with the younger. Among the women and daughters housework is shared. All females respond to the males. Although the women are in genuine submission to the men, they take charge of the kitchen and running the house and home.

Contrasting with this one-for-all, all-for-one attitude within the walls of a home of an Iranian family is the independence-oriented American family living in Tehran. Efforts are made to give everyone in an American family their own room and private space. So it was in our home in Tehran. We all had our room and desk or study area and work area. Our son Don's room was on the front of our house, overlooking the swimming pool. He had also set up a darkroom and photo lab downstairs in a corner of a large room there. It was his own area and no one dared go in without his permission. His things were respected.

Late into the night and early morning hours we could hear him working downstairs. He did his own things working on school projects. He was the photographer for much of the school's activities, including the annual candid pictures and school paper. He did his work on his own, and asked for little help in anything. He was a classic result of American teaching on self-reliance.

Don learned Farsi in class at T.A.S. and earned an award, as did Diana, for proficiency in the language which uses Arabic script, not a form of writing which would come easily to Americans. He got around Tehran well, using taxis and 'jube hoppers,' as the Americans called them. The jube hoppers were vehicles which were bigger than a motorized ricksha; they were more like a diminutive truck. They were small enough to zip in and out of traffic and hop up on sidewalks, take side trails, and cut across open lots.

The jube hopper allowed two or three passengers to squeeze onto the one seat of the cab, while the small pickup bed in the rear provided space for quite a few more to sit or stand, holding on tightly to the strong bars making up the support for the top and sides. On these bars, coverings could be attached to support any type of cargo, but riders strong enough and brave enough to ride in the rough-and-tumble little vehicles used the bars mostly as handholds. These were the favorite mode of transportation in the city for our children. Jube hoppers would get them around quickly and cheaply, and home in time for dinner.

At mealtime we gathered around a large table in the 'no room,'

a room off of which most of the other rooms could be reached. Ours was reduced somewhat in size to a typical dining room, but still with a sitting area, like a parlor of old. It was a room for a lot of family fun, chatter, and serious discussions of school and friends or problems.

This dining table provided us with an opportunity to hear each other and share ideas; we all had our place and were encouraged to talk a lot. If someone was not talking, someone else would bring him or her out, uncovering any problem that might be troubling him or her, usually her.

Even though we sat in this land strange to us in many ways, around that table we, with our children, felt very secure in our home.

At Christmas our decorated tree was in this room, which had no outside windows. Although we celebrated, we felt it would be wise not to reveal the tree to those outside who did not celebrate Christmas. It was our way of both showing the Muslims respect and not causing any unnecessary danger that a Christmas tree might incite.

We wanted the family tree, and in these walls it made us have a warm and joyful Christmas. This room was a family room, and we wanted our children to feel close while we were all here and together, far from their home in America. The six of us spent a lot of time around that table eating and using it for working on projects and playing games.

One night, after playing several games of Pollyanna, we decided we were going to expand the game, and make the playing board a lot larger. We drew more and more spaces on sheets of typing paper and pasted them to a large piece of cardboard. We worked long into the night and finished with about six times the number of spaces on which to move the pieces around to end the game. It took hours to play, but we did finish one game that night. It covered most of the table, and the game required some endurance and determination to complete. The new game was dubbed 'Super Polly.' We wanted to instill the stick-to-it-iveness in our children as they were growing up into pretty good independent thinkers and workers. This was one of those attempts to do so.

These hours helped us stay close as a family, which was about to begin breaking up. Spring surrounded us, and the school year was coming to a close. Final tests were taken and all our children passed with high grades. We shared the joys of talk of the school year and looked forward to a summer of travel and other activities.

There was one deep hole in our hearts as we planned those things. Don had turned 18 on April 30. In May, 1975 he was to participate in the

Tehran American School graduation ceremony on the grounds of the U.S. Embassy in the city of Tehran. Right after graduation, he was to fly back to Texas for college.

Sylvia and I could not conceive of our family without him. The girls, his sisters, for whom he would have laid down his life to save, went around the house moping. We made all the graduation preparations, and we went through the beautiful ceremony for the graduates. I had been asked to lead the entire assembly in a prayer on stage for these seniors going off on their own, leaving their families in Iran.

We were thankful for them, the school, the families, and the occasion, but parents with sad and broken hearts made up most of the ones in attendance. It was a day of emotions on this compound, where less than five years in the future on these very grounds, Americans would be held hostage by a fanatical regime. On this day no one had any inkling of that, but we all sensed the dissatisfaction among the populace of the rule of the Shah, Reza Pahlavi. These quiet but deep rumblings were well below the surface at that time, but they were there and they were real and huge.

A bigger international upheaval was occurring this day across this old land of Persia than was felt in the emotions of the moms and dads, sisters and brothers, watching the graduates walk across the stage to receive their T.A.S. diplomas. It was just not defined.

Don walked across, took his diploma, and accepted a scholarship from the American Woman's Club of Tehran because of the photographic work he had done to help them.

When the square 'mortar boards' were taken from the heads of these graduates and thrown into the air, an era came to an end for many families, not excepting ours. This took pieces out of the homes of Americans all across northern Tehran, and the tears running down so many faces in such large streams were both of joy and of sorrow. These "little" boys and girls were now young men and women going away from home and off to college, to America more than 8,000 miles away from the ones who bore them and nurtured and trained them for all those years. They would be away over there, while those left behind would begin more and more to realize that this Muslim culture was simmering with very strong, low-level unrest.

As we returned to our home after the virtually flawless ceremony, we were full of planning for the next few short days. After parking the Jeep inside our gate we entered the house and hung around Don. It was his day, and we were already feeling the heaviness of his being gone.

He and Sylvia talked more than all the rest of us. For long hours they discussed final things of importance. They also discussed his 18 years at home with us, and his returning to the United States to live alone and attend college. He had chosen East Texas State to study Spanish and photography. Sylvia's parents and their dinner table were only 30 minutes away.

My word to him was threefold: enroll in college for the summer; do not live in Sherman, but live on campus; do not buy a motorcycle.



When he flew out of Tehran, of course, a part of each of us and of our entire existence flew out with him. Sylvia had not had any real sleep for three days. She could hardly bear to see him leave, but the departure was another reality. She does 'reality' really well, even though this one was different. All of us could hardly wait for his first communication from Texas after he landed.

When it came we were not very surprised to learn that he had decided to stay in Sherman (our home before leaving for Iran) for the summer, living with the Jim Howell family. He had decided to enroll in college in the fall, not the summer. He advised us "my motorcycle is just what I needed." So much for my last instructions to him.

At suppertime we ate more quietly than we had in the past year. We sat in our places and almost could imagine Don in his chair, laughing with us. Imagination, though, did not bring back his happy countenance, his enthusiastic style of talking, his bigger-than-life stories of the day, his warmth, his love for his sisters, his great love and respect for his mother, his honor shown to his father. We ate quietly. There was an empty chair at our table.

Chapter Sixteen

Hot Ride through the Deserts of Iran

After Don left Tehran for college in the U.S., we began noticing we were getting more response to our gospel message. We had several more conversions among the Iranians; however, most of them were coming from families who had been believers in Christ and had fallen away. They were not coming from among the Muslims, for the most part. In fact, we began to realize that most converts from Islam were coming through the efforts of the army major who carried food into poor settlements and taught them after they accepted his assistance.

We were kept very busy by our work among the Iranian church members and the American church members. This diluted our efforts to reach our objective of establishing a permanent church, because our time was limited to evangelize, trying to reach the unconverted.

We sought some way to rest and refresh ourselves. We found some solace and re-energizing in traveling to new places to visit in this vast country. We went to the Caspian Sea on several occasions and to various villages close around Tehran. But all five of us looked for more. Lying in bed one night and talking, Sylvia and I decided we would take the same trip that summer that Don and I had made when it was cold during the days right after Christmas. That was an extremely cold trip, but the one we made in the summer was far from cold.

The winter trip had been made with no heater in the Jeep. The summer trip had to be made with no air conditioner in the Jeep.

The trip Don and I had made was fast, and we reached out to share the gospel with others all along the way. The one with Sylvia and our three girls was more recreational, educational, and for seeing sights. Besides, all of us needed something fairly drastic to take our minds away from the emptiness we were feeling in the absence of the son who had blessed our home with a countenance of happiness and attitude of adventure. He was being sorely missed, made worse by our knowledge that it might be years before we saw him again. Yes, the trip served a significant purpose in our lives and in our work.

We started out early as we had done before. As I had promised

these four ladies, Tehran was quiet and we got through the vast city well before the intensifying of heat from the burning sun. As it did rise when we were on the road south of the city we could not bear it without having all the windows down and the wind flowing through the Jeep.

From the time we got up that morning, we tape-recorded all our movements and thoughts on what we saw, carrying a portable recorder and many rolls of tape to cover the entire trip. We intended to send the finished product to Don in East Texas, since he would be able to recall his trip and in an imaginative way ‘share’ the trip with us.

Although the desert had been ‘stirred’ by the high walls of winds called ‘haboobs’ many times since that preceding December, there were no obvious changes to me. I jokingly said that it occurred to me that there had been very little change in that desert since the Jews were taken captive and held here in the biblical Babylonian captivity centuries before the time of Christ’s walk on earth.

Daniel and Esther were in this land during the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Darius and Cyrus had ruled over this land with their vast armies. Streets in Tehran carried the names of those kings as Dahryoosh and Seeroos.

We knew there were tombs in Iran of some of these people named in Old Testament scripture: Esther’s in the city of Hamadan; Daniel’s in Shoosh, called Susa in the Bible; and Cyrus’s not far from Persepolis, as we would see further down the road. The excitement was high in Sylvia as we made this trip seemingly back into ancient history, a keen interest of hers. The girls were more focused on the miserable heat, as they were too young to fully appreciate the things we were privileged to see, and touch, and experience, in this land of ancient Persia.

The shopping we did in Isfahan helped the girls enjoy the trip, however. Isfahan was a delightful stop on the way, as we visited some of our members there. One of the American families told us of baptizing some people in the river running through the city, and showed us the site in that river. They explained that because of their preaching of the gospel of Christ the government had closed the church doors in one place and forced them to move the meeting place because the ‘documents were not in order.’ We concluded that there would be no way to ever get the documents in order to preach Christ in that area.

We enjoyed the sights of the city and moved on down country toward Persepolis after only two days in the slow and quiet city of Isfahan.

On the highway half way between Isfahan and Persepolis we sped around a curve. I noticed a garage for car repairs and ‘pomp-e-benzin’ (gasoline pump, a service station). One kilometer down the road we were recording what we were seeing when a loud bang came from our motor. The roar continued as I slowed down and pulled off the highway. The recorder caught these sounds.

When I raised the hood I saw some bolts had broken off where the exhaust pipe connects to the engine block. The exhaust fumes and consequent heat could not be tolerated on such a drive as we were making.

It came to my mind that we had just rounded that curve where there was a garage back one ‘click,’ as the Americans in Iran termed kilometers. We drove back to the garage, as that was not only our best hope, but our only chance of getting any kind of mechanical help.

The alternatives to being able to get help in this vast wilderness were to hitchhike or bake in the oven of sand. I quietly prayed for help as we slowly drove that kilometer to the garage. I pulled into the place where I had read a sign in Farsi that I believed was a garage. But at the time I rolled into the drive I was not so sure that I had read it correctly.

A bright-eyed young man came out of the door in very encouraging, grease-stained coveralls. Getting down from the Jeep I smiled and spoke and raised the hood. He and I looked at the motor, and I pointed to where the pipe was hanging loose from the motor. One bolt was gone and the other one was barely holding the pipe to the engine.

He smiled and told me to wait. It was a long wait. Who could possibly know what was going on inside that garage? As I stood there apprehensively I noticed a telephone booth across the highway on some shop or other. I used that phone to call ahead all the way to Shiraz, the city of our destination, where an American Christian family awaited our arrival later that night. I told him what had happened, and assured him we were going to get there late, and I had no idea how late.

He asked if he needed to come get us, but I told him to wait to see how things developed with the Jeep.

When I hung up, the best mechanic in the entire world emerged from the darkness of his parts department with a small 4” by 5” by 5” box in his hand. He smiled and held up the box for me to read in English. It was a kit for repairing the very problem we had. It was made for a “Jeep Utility Wagon,” the vehicle model we were driving.

I will always wonder about this quick chain of events. Why did that happen at this spot in the middle of the Iranian desert? How did I happen to even see and read the sign in Farsi that told me this was a garage, the only one I saw on the entire journey? What were the chances that there would be a Jeep kit in that little building on this highway?

I wondered, “What would have happened to my girls if it had been necessary for us to abandon the Jeep in that desert on a basically barren highway? Where would we have been?”

My pay to that mechanic may have been way too excessive, but it was low compared to what I might have paid in other ways. It was by my own choice that the pay was high, as his asking price was modest and fair. I saw that as rare, since in the big city we knew we were gouged in many transactions. We quietly and humbly and thankfully drove away, southward deeper into the desert. Again I silently prayed to God, this time in great, sincere gratitude.

We used much water from our big supply, which we had consciously packed in Tehran in five huge plastic bottles of about five gallons each, and which we refilled in Isfahan in anticipation of the great need we would have on the desert.

After rolling many miles down the two-lane highway we drove into the 2,500 year-old city of Persepolis built by King Darius; we were in awe at the immensity of ruins preserved so well in the dry desert. I saw keen interest in the girls’ eyes as we got down from the Jeep. I had them all drink a significant amount of water to prevent them drying out under the conditions of the arid, dehydrating atmosphere, as we all walked through the ruins and back in time.

Sylvia stood for a picture in the doorway of the palace possibly prepared for Esther, then she walked out away from the palace for another picture to show more of the actual site. She could have spent days at this place, reading and dreaming and imagining.



We read literature there on the Shah's 1971 celebration of the 2,500th year of the existence of Persepolis. A tent city had been erected there for leaders and kings and presidents of the world at that time. The "King of Kings" (Shahanshah), Reza Pahlavi, led the historic festivities. We considered that 1971 gathering of kings and heads of state as a feast for the ego of the Shah.

Forcing ourselves away, we got back on the highway and drove to Shiraz. Arriving near the time we had originally estimated, we surprised our American hosts but were welcomed warmly into their home, our home for a couple of nights.

We exchanged stories and laid plans for the next day. We saw all the sites, including the Mosque of Mirrors. As we entered the mosque, the girls were required to wear chadors. There was a certain way, we later learned, that women of ill repute, harlots, wore chadors: with the hem on the outside of the garment. As the young men at the entrance to the mosque assisted Sylvia with her chador, they intentionally put the hem out. She innocently wore the covering the way it was put on her.

A little Shirazi, Iranian resident of Shiraz, stopped her with fire in her eyes. We could not understand, but in brief she was angry with the young men for treating a visitor to the mosque in such a disrespectful way. She re-covered Sylvia properly and scolded the men, who laughed as they walked away from her.

The mosque was literally covered with tiny mirrors, some no more than an inch in diameter. Walls and ceilings were almost totally made up of the tiny reflecting shapes.

After leaving the mosque and on the outside near the front, two men approached Sylvia in a threatening way with pretense of touching her breasts. She walked between them with her hands drawn protectively to her chest. When she was directly between them, she swung both arms out knocking them away from her. They hastened away in amazement.

This 'man's world' was not one conducive to drawing a Western woman into comfort. We realized with deepening thought that for centuries women had endured this with not much, if any, recourse.

We concluded our visit in Shiraz with very pleasant tours of the city sites, of the tombs of Sa'adi and Hafez, famed poets of Persian culture. Honoring the poets, the people kept gardens of oranges and flowers around their burial sites. These were pleasing sites with attractive aromas.

As we drove back out onto the highway and headed north toward Tehran, we noted tents of a tribe of Bedouins off to our left toward some low-lying hills. The tribe was Qashqai, who roamed southern Iran year round. A woman, colorfully dressed, came around to the passenger side of the Jeep, to Sylvia's side, as we pulled over to see and possibly photograph the intriguing sight. She wanted to sell us some of their handicrafts.



The woman brought her little girl out to show her off, as any mother in the US might do, but it didn't hurt that it appealed to these people from America driving a car so that a bargain might be reached for our money in exchange for her comb to clean the wool of sheep. They were shepherds and had a large flock of sheep by which they made a living.

We did make a deal with her for a little money, given to her mostly to be able to drive away without incident, just in case the tribesmen might want us to 'stay for a while.' We drove at top speed on our return trip to Tehran after retracing the route we had driven a week earlier. We were tired, but quite fulfilled with all we had seen. Sylvia sent the tape-recorded cassettes to Don in Texas.

We were ready now to get back to work.

Chapter Seventeen

Short So-journ Back in Texas

During the first tour of duty in Tehran we made progress in our primary mission of building up Christians in a land where they were literally second-class citizens. They were frequently passed over for promotions in business, they were not appointed to government posts, and they were punished severely, even killed, in some cases for converting to Christianity out of Islam.

In the face of the many disadvantages they faced, some chose the perilous road of living the Christian life in Tehran. At the end of our two years, our assembly in Tehran numbered twenty-nine. We met in Mary's home and took communion for the last time in July 1976.

There was much sadness as we said 'good-bye,' but I assured the members that we would return after a few months in the United States. The time of refreshing at home in Texas was to be a time I used to report to supporting churches and re-secure funding for our next tour of service in Iran. I had no idea how difficult that was going to be.

The Iranian church was to continue to meet at Mary's apartment, while the Americans would hold on to the church compound lease and meet there. Mary and Joseph, the young member with aspirations and zeal to preach, would continue to work with the Iranians, and additional teaching duties would be rotated among the American men who would lead in the American assemblies as well as with the Iranians as the occasion arose.

A series of private sales and a garage sale ended our ownership of furniture and all of our house furnishings not needed at the compound. There were none of the things in the U.S.; therefore, we were completely "free of worldly possessions" as our old time preachers may have said. We trusted the churches in America to take care of all our needs on our "furlough" at home.

Our return trip to America included traveling through the Bible lands and Europe. It had been eleven years since we had been in Israel, and we were of the mind that there were many things for our girls and for us to experience and learn there.

My birthday happened as we were in Jerusalem. For my gift my girls secretly bought a hand-carved wooden chess set with horses for knights made from dark wood for one side, and camels for knights with

lighter-colored olive wood for the other side. It was sitting in our hotel room when we came in after one of our all-day tours. Very nice surprise!

We saw the usual sites all around Jerusalem, including one of the traditional places thought to be the hill of Calvary, where the Lord was crucified. That site was about 1000 feet from the door of our hotel, the Pilgrims Palace. Additionally, we were excited to see sites away from Jerusalem, like Masada, a fortress near the Dead Sea where the Jews held off the Roman army for months before they committed suicide one day before the Romans could reach them to kill, capture, and enslave them. We saw Qumran, where in 1947 ancient scrolls were found with Old Testament words from Isaiah on them.

We drove to the small cities of very old Jericho, then on to Cana, where Jesus turned water into wine, and on down a few miles south of Jerusalem to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born to Mary in a place where cattle were kept.

On the Sunday we were there we were in Galilee on the side of a low mount that is called the Mount of the Beatitudes. Sylvia, the two older girls and I took communion, as the five of us stood on that mountain overlooking the Sea of Galilee. After we prayed and sang some songs, we read from the Matthew passage that is termed the ‘sermon on the mount,’ chapters 5, 6, and 7, containing some of our Lord’s new and highly significant words, some of our favorite passages. I thought the one that read, “Lay not up treasures on earth,” was most appropriate for our situation in life at this particular time, for we literally HAD no earthly belongings.

After spending not nearly enough time on the mount, we had our driver take us down by the side of the sea. We were near Capernaum, where Christ fed thousands with a small amount of bread and fish. Not far away was an ancient Jewish synagogue where it was fairly certain Jesus would have stood and read the Old Testament scripture as a young man. Then the girls were permitted to swim for a few minutes in the Sea of Galilee. The pure blue water was too enticing to them, and they could not resist the opportunity. It was quite different from the Dead Sea where they had a chance to swim earlier and literally lay back on the high-salt water and did not sink, because of the high concentration of salt. While they felt gritty coming out of that water, this Seawater was refreshing and clean. But we had to move on and prepare to depart the Bible lands for the journey across the countries of Europe.

We visited Rome, Paris, London, and then across the huge At-

lantic Ocean to land in Washington, D.C., to which city our son Don had flown up from Dallas to meet us for a complete family tour of our capital.

We had all agreed we would not make a public scene when we saw him after our separation of more than a year with him in college in Texas as we finished our tour in Tehran, but when those doors between us and him opened at Dulles airport, his second sister, Elizabeth, screamed and ran to his big Texas embrace! We shared the excitement as well as the bear hugs all around, and we talked non-stop all the way to our hotel in the city.

As we toured D.C. and walked along the streets, Don, fresh from the friendliness of Texas, spoke to everyone as we walked by them. "Howdy. How're yew? Hidy doo," he kept greeting them. The Washingtonians gave him a disgusting, drop-dead look. He said, "They're not too friendly, are they?"

The tour of Washington was a great re-entry to our country where freedoms abound and liberty is our way of life. Coming home from a Muslim state like Iran makes an American appreciate deeply the freedom we enjoy and desire to share around the world.

We were joyfully welcomed as we landed at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport and swept straight to the apartment in Sherman. We made the fifty-five mile drive in an hour from the airport to the apartment, complete with commodes that worked!

With the support and encouragement of our sponsoring congregation in Sherman, Texas, I began making appointments to speak at churches for financial support to return to Iran in 1977 and continue our work. The fundraising proved to be unfruitful.

After several months of seeking funds to return to the field, I actually had fewer commitments for money than when I arrived in the States. I was really bewildered, and turned to God in a prayer of question. I had been to many churches I had visited before going to Iran in the first place. Then I visited Frito-Lay to rekindle friendships and talk about our life in Tehran. We had seen our family and friends. We were totally without anything reliable on which to live. We had no house, no car, no furniture, and no job.

Sylvia and I are prone to prayer and fasting in times of stress and major decision. We did at this time. If ever there was a time for prayer and fasting, it was now. On a Saturday in January 1977, she and I began a fast. The next morning I was up very early for me, well before 5:00 am. I

quietly prayed for God to let us know what we were to do — should I continue to search for a way to get back to Iran or would returning to secular work in industry be the best thing for me to do?

We attended worship that morning in Sherman, using a car provided by the members. Afterwards, we returned to our apartment furnished by the church. I was in a dilemma that afternoon as I tried to figure out what I was expected by God to do. In mid-afternoon the phone rang. When I answered, it was a manager from Frito-Lay, Lawrence Wisdom. He said, “Don, we have been meeting this afternoon, and we want to make you an offer to come back to work for us.” I could not believe my ears, but he shook me into reality as he asked, “When can you come down?” I blurted out, “When do you want me?”

He said, “Can you come in tomorrow??”

I thought, ‘Can I? Can I?’ but I said, “Yes, I’ll be in tomorrow.”

I felt it was best to go in and see what they had in mind before saying anything to anyone except Sylvia about the conversation.

The next day the proper managers talked to me at Frito-Lay Research Department and confirmed their more than generous offer. We did the physical examination and paper work necessary to get me back on the payroll. I was again an employee!

I raced home to Sherman from Irving, and ran up the stairs at the apartment to tell Sylvia the news. She was excited, and asked, “Is this really what you want to do?” I told her that I believed that it was what God allowed us to do in answer to our prayers.

That evening, the elders of the Sherman church were meeting to discuss our situation, not knowing of the Frito-Lay offer and my acceptance. Oddly, they were meeting in the home of Wayne Hefton, the one I chose to call to see about meet-

ing with them to tell them about Frito-Lay and my accepting the job. Wayne and Ann had visited us in Tehran, and offered support as only a shepherd of God’s people can offer. They were



amazed and shocked, pleased and surprised by much they saw in Iran and of our work.

Mary Zaya, my right hand in Iran, was very pleased to have an elder and his wife in the church come to visit. She went with us to meet the Heftons at the airport and gave them a big bouquet of roses when they came through the gate. She was very much into the work; at one time she said, “I love working for God.” And so she did, helping a lot.

When I told him I had good news he asked me to come down to their meeting. I chose to make the walk slowly, to gather my thoughts in order to clearly tell them what we had decided, if they approved. I did not want to seem overly relieved or too joyous for fear they would be upset that they would have to find another missionary for my replacement.

As I entered and sat at the table with the six of them, there was intense interest and attention to my comment. I began saying, “God seems to have answered our prayers. He has given me direction.”

When I told them about the Frito-Lay meeting and the offer they made me, and that I had accepted it, they all gave a collective sigh of relief.

That night effectively ended my formal life as a missionary. Details of announcing and reporting and accounting would all be worked out, but as of that night I was back in industry...with a salary.

The elders thanked me and dismissed me from the meeting. Actually, I walked home in the dark very slowly. Although I was sure God wanted this to be our direction, and a great burden had been lifted from me: a longing, a melancholy sadness overtook me.

“I am no longer a missionary.”

I had become conditioned and field-trained. I could reach the lost, and I knew how to plant a church. But, “as of this hour, I am out,” I thought.

These thoughts wore on me heavily as I walked more and more slowly back to Sylvia and the children. She met me and asked if the elders were okay with the decision. I assured her that they were.

Before we settled down that night, the telephone rang. It was an elder calling from a church in Oklahoma. He said, “We have been reading about your work in Iran, and we would like to assist you with the financing. We could consider sponsorship of your work if you are interested.”

I did not hesitate with my answer, “I appreciate your call and your interest, but I have decided to return to industry. I won’t be going back to

the mission field.” He expressed some disappointment, but said he understood, and he hung up the phone. The man’s name, the name of the church, and the name of the town went out of my mind at that moment, and never came back to me. When I explained it all to Sylvia it was as much a mystery to her as it was, and has ever been, to me.

We turned our thoughts to Frito-Lay and to a life in Irving, Texas.

We did soon move to an apartment there, got the children enrolled in school, placed our membership at a large church, and began doing research on tortilla chips at one of the greatest companies on earth.

We got permission from the new found friends in the eldership at the happy, friendly South MacArthur Church of Christ in South Irving, Texas, to establish a “mission learning center” for children during the Sunday morning Bible class time. We began teaching them that we are to take the gospel to ‘all the world.’ That first time, we emphasized Mexico.

The work at Frito-Lay went exceedingly well, as did our work and sufficiency in our church activities. Our thoughts, however, drifted often to Tehran and the people there. We frequently wondered how the little church there was faring. We heard virtually nothing from them. My promise to return to them tended to haunt me.

A thought came to me that would allow me to keep that promise. Now, all I had to do was determine how to put a plan into effect to make that happen.

Chapter Eighteen

Bell Helicopter International Lures Us Back to Tehran

I wrote to an American church member and friend in Tehran who worked for Bell Helicopter. I asked him about the church and if I might be able to visit with him and his wife if I came back for a short time. He assured me that I would stay with them while I was there.

I had a vacation earned in the spring of 1978, and I asked my Fri-to-Lay immediate supervisor, Larry Wisdom, for an extra week, unpaid. He arranged it, giving me 3 consecutive weeks off, plenty of time to make my visit to Tehran.

The South MacArthur church agreed to finance a trip as a part of their mission budget. I flew to Tehran in May and lived with the Charles Kuhns as I visited the Iranian church members and spoke for them on Sunday, still meeting at Mary's house.

Charles and I talked about their needs, and I asked if he would attend services with them on Sunday to teach them more about the Christian life. Having an interest in the growth of the small church and being an astute Bible student, he agreed to do so. But he put a little stipulation on it. "You have to visit Bell Helicopter with me one day and meet Harry Smith in the laboratory. He needs a chemist."

Without emotion or desire or even interest, I agreed. One morning I got up early with him and rode a BHI bus to work. He walked me by some helicopters, including one of the Shah's, on our way to the lab to meet Harry.

Harry was a robust, handlebar-mustached individual. He showed me around the laboratory, introduced me to the staff of American men and women, as well as Iranian men and women. They were all assigned to the work in the lab.

I was familiar with the atomic absorption spectrograph and the gas chromatograph, thanks to the years at Dow Chemical Company in Freeport, Texas, from years back. I liked the two technicians who were learning to use it, and the Iranian woman who was training to manage the lab. The open position was primarily one of training Iranians.

Charles left me in the enthusiastic hands of Harry who, near the end of the day, led me to the General Manager who was, in no sense, a waster of time.

He met me, asked if I liked Tehran and if I could speak Farsi. He leaned over his desk and asked, “Do you want to come back to Tehran and work for Bell?”

I looked at Harry and back to the GM, and blurted, “Yes, sir.”

I don’t know why I said that, but he responded, “We can pay you this (generous) amount of money,” and enumerated all the benefits.

He told Harry, “Do the paper work, and I’ll call Bedford.” That was Bedford, Texas, between Dallas and Fort Worth and about 12 minutes from my home!

When they answered right away, he said, “I’ve got a man standing right in front of me who wants to work for me. He is from Texas, has been here, and speaks some Farsi. I’ll send him to you, and I want you to hire him.” Then he looked up and asked, “What’s your name again?”

I thought, “What am I doing? Sylvia doesn’t even know.”

The GM asked me when I could get back over there, and I told him it would be a month, as I had to “give a long notice to Frito-Lay.”

He said, “Get to Bedford as soon as you can,” and dismissed us. I had been in his office less than 10 minutes.

I immediately decided that I had to tell Sylvia this face to face. No phone call could be made to tell her what I had just done!

I kept trying to wake up. The day had seemed like a fast dream over which I had lost control. As I walked toward the lab with Harry, I kept turning over in my head, “I am an employee of two companies as it stands right now.”

Harry announced to the lab personnel that I would be coming back in June. That fact was not even really registering on me at the time.

On the bus after work I told Charles what had happened, and he said, “That’s great. Will Sylvia come with you?”

I told him, “I hope she will.”

He asked, “You didn’t call her?”

I told him, “She would take it better if I told her in person.”

He grinned and said, “Yeah, I see what you mean.”

The remainder of my three weeks in Tehran went by slowly, but it gave me time to adjust my thinking to the life ahead.

When I did return to Irving, Texas, on as direct a flight as I could arrange, I was tentative as I told Sylvia and asked her if she thought it was the right choice. She assured me she thought it was, but she could not come until September, because she would have to get Diana into college. That thought, at this time, had not been a factor in the equation.

All arrangements were made and I returned to Iran. Charles Kuhn and his wife, Allene, met me at the Mehrabad Airport and welcomed me to stay with them until my family would arrive. It was an offer I gratefully accepted.

Chapter Nineteen

The World-Shaking Revolution Heats Up

Around the dinner table each night Charles and I talked about the condition of the Tehran church and the situation of the Iranian people versus the Shah.

The protests by the populace were small, but obviously gaining momentum. There was talk of more of them, and they were growing in protester numbers.

The Iranian subject-citizens were not happy with the government of the Shah being so closely allied with America and the West. They were not pleased with the American ideals and cultural imposition by so many of the westerners in Tehran, and the thousands of other “infidel” workers all over Iran bringing “western civilization” into their lives.

The clerics were preaching against the immorality of materialism and secularism. Every Friday at the thousands of mosques throughout Iran anti-American messages were preached to the Islamic faithful. They equated America’s brand of morality with sin and blasphemy and the highest forms of infidelity.

The fact of these accusations was evident in the everyday life of Americans seen in loud and drunken bawdiness, and displaying impatience and abuse of the Iranians and others who worked for them. The Americans paid no attention to the dress ‘codes’ of Islam in the clothes they wore; nor did they respect the customs of the Iranians. There were vast differences in the possessions of the relatively wealthy Americans and the poor Iranians. This disparity in material things created deep and lasting resentment in the minds of the Iranians.

The Iranians felt no real guilt in taking from the rich and giving to the poor, of which they considered themselves to be a part. Americans were robbed and cheated and overcharged at any opportunity. The Iranian Muslims felt this was all right because of this contrast of worldly goods.

I personally had my American Express card taken from me twice. Once my pocket was picked in a crowd, and I lost my wallet with all that was in it, including the card and cash and identification papers. A second time I laid my card down on the seat of a taxicab while I took some cash

from my wallet. The driver stealthily took it as I got out of the taxi. He drove away with me standing there trying to ‘inventory’ my belongings. Realizing he had taken my card I understood why he took off so fast even before I had the car door closed.

One occasion when Sylvia had clothes hanging on the clothesline in our small enclosed backyard, a thief scaled the 8 foot tile wall and took several pairs of blue jeans belonging to her and the children. At forty-to a hundred-dollars for one pair, which was the going price in town, that represented quite a haul to this crook who put one over on this — as he supposed — “infidel” family. That had to be some small victory for the Islamic Jihad, in his way of seeing things.

All these things were recounted as Charles and I tried to size up what was going on around us every day. Virtually under our noses Iranians were plotting how the masses of protesters would eventually overthrow the Shah, who was a Muslim only in name but not in practice, as they saw him. They really did not want a king ruling them. They believed the King required allegiance they could give only to Allah. They did not feel subject to a king; they felt enslaved only to their God. The Shah added insult to this deep spiritual injury by accepting money from the West for oil. The oil revenues in these last years of the Shah’s reign exceeded \$20 billion.

While much of the income went for social programs under the White Revolution, the people felt the purity of Islam was sacrificed for this wealth and power. They wanted to return to the old customs where they were not forced to share their lives with the infidels of a culture that was in tremendous contradiction to their own. Their culture was built on, and dependent on, strict adherence to the Islamic religion of their forefathers of thousands of years.

Rocking the nation from France, the Ayatollah Khomeini missed no opportunity to pursue every advantage he saw to rid his nation of the evil Shah and the satanic America. He seized the doctrine of then president, Jimmy Carter’s campaign against the Shah’s “abuses of human rights” to rally the Iranian masses to take back their government by force.

He recorded his preaching of revolution in France and when the tapes were replicated and played in the major mosques of influence all over the country during the years of 1977 and 78, the nation was whipped into a unified frenzy to return to the old days of fundamental Islam and conservative culture.

The Americans working in Iran began sensing the growing feeling

of rebellion and revolution. even in their coworkers. As contracts ended between them and their companies they chose to leave Iran and not re-up to return for work, choosing rather to stay out of the chaos and instability and danger of the Muslim hoards of protestors.

Jimmy Carter could not possibly realize the upheaval he was fomenting by his anti-Shah speeches and policies. He was bent on persuading the Shah to abdicate and turn the country over to the Ayatollahs. President Carter's apparent disdain for what he perceived as the inhumane treatment of the Iranians by the government of the Shah seemed to blind him to the realities of the consequences of the fall of the Shah.

The Shah and his autocratic rule, with his powerful though small cadre of loyal military officers, could have kept Iran on a growth path and a compatible relationship with the West. Carter undermined his throne and insisted privately and publicly that he respond to the demands of those of the citizenry that were radical Islamist fundamentalists.

What the Shah was doing was systematically removing his enemies in the Tudeh (Communist) Party. Not privy to the U.S. Government policy, we assumed the CIA was assisting the Shah to strengthen his rule by helping eliminate the Communist influence in the Muslim land. It seemed to be a win-win situation to us, weakening communism and strengthening our ally.

By weakening the Shah, however, and strengthening the hand of the Ayatollah, Jimmy Carter laid the groundwork for the Ayatollah to lead Iran into complete rebellion against the Shah. Carter's actions resulted in the characterization of the U.S. in the minds of Muslims all over the world as "the Great Satan." He virtually poked our culture in the eye as he brought the masses into the streets of Tehran and all major Iranian cities.

In early September 1978, rioting was an everyday and night affair. Buildings were vandalized, burglarized and burned by the protesters-turned-rioters. Without question, seeds were planted in these young, and older, radical minds that this kind of force, with the strength of the Ayatollah behind them, calling on Allah for guidance and victory, could create a world wide Islamic caliphate, and Allah would be pleased.

Sylvia and our two youngest daughters, Elizabeth (Beth) and Robin, returned to Tehran in the early days of that September. I took off work from Bell Helicopter to pick them up at Mehrabad Airport and take them to our newly acquired apartment in Seyyed Khan Dahn. Near our home in the major intersection where 6 streets came together and regarded as a

key center of activity, a nightly gathering of activists assembled with the avowed objective of deposing — or killing — the Shah. The fever pitch to which the heated every-night debate drove the virtual ‘mob’ sent shrill and thunderous noises through the streets from the intersection, which was only 5 minutes by foot from our apartment.

My decision to bring the family back into Iran was virtually a 50-50 one, yes or no. The only reason I did was that we kept feeling that the madness of the public denouncement of the Shah by the Carter Administration would end as the Iranian masses saw futility in what they were doing. But the vitriolic rhetoric and impassioned acts of violent protest did not subside; rather, they soon escalated to the point of no turning back. Still the pressure by the U.S. Government was maintained.

On the very September day that my family arrived in Tehran, the Shah ordered a nine o’clock curfew for the city. No one was to be on the streets after nine, no exceptions. Soldiers were set to “kill” anyone breaking curfew. As we settled in for our first night back together in over three months we felt intense uneasiness, wondering if the curfew would hold.

It seemed at first as though it was going to quell the rioting, but later in the night we heard scattered gunfire and the calls of men praising their god, “Allah-u-Akhbar,” “God is great!” The shots were far away, but the cries of prayer-praise were everywhere, even in our neighborhood.

We did not go to sleep readily that night. I wondered if I had made a terrible mistake in bringing my family back to be with me during those days. We feared the potential consequences for Americans in an atmosphere of Islamic rebellion. We pondered the sounds outside our window.

Sylvia and I discussed our situation and how we would get the children into T.A.S., Tehran American School, which was about a quarter of a mile away. I told her that I was meeting with the church, but that I was not getting much work done among the church members. The reason was that almost anything that could be named was in disarray. It was most difficult to make any solid plan.

Ours was basically a day-to-day existence. Every dawn unveiled increasing news of more looting and destruction of any offices associated with money and wealth, such as banks, money exchanges, and jewelry stores. The agitation in the streets was increasingly pro-Khomeini and anti-government. We could not understand why the Carter Administration was supporting such a rebellion, but we felt sure the U.S. Government knew what should be done and was doing it.

It was not clear to us on the ground however. We received only sketches of information from Bell Helicopter management statements and from our embassy bulletins. We also had 'grapevine news' from people who were our friends within those organizations. Mostly we heard what Iranian thought was from our Iranian friends and the few church members who had remained in the city. The people of Iran, however, were usually abuzz with their tone of revolutionary voices.

We learned the Iranians were seeing Jimmy Carter as a supporter of their cause and an answer to their prayers. One senior Iranian diplomat in Washington was said to have made the statement that President Carter had betrayed the Shah. He was sure that this betrayal would lead to Soviet intervention in the affairs of Iran to control the future.

Russia wanted control of the Iranian oil and access to the warm water seaports off the southern coast. The diplomat feared the Tudeh party would work in accord with the religious fanatics, both groups hating the Americans and the "Satan."

Daily the world became more attuned to the heating up of the Iranian Revolution, which became viewed as an Islamic Revolution. The Ayatollah solidified his credibility as the potential leader of Iran. If he could indeed topple the Shah the idea of that possibility would shake the world. Notice was taken that the Shah, who was once considered invincible, could indeed fall. In fact, an envoy from the White House, Ramsey Clark, encouraged the Ayatollah Khomeini in Paris. It was even said that Andrew Young, American ambassador to the U.N., made the comment that Khomeini could possibly be viewed as a 'saint' if the Shah fell and he took over rule of Iran.

None of us in Tehran at that time understood what was happening at any level of either government, but we knew it was becoming more dangerous for Americans. One old Iranian gentleman advised me to tell anyone who asked that I was British. As the days grew cooler the nights became 'hotter.'

Sylvia and I made a plan. She decided that she wanted to stay with me as long as T.A.S. was open and operating. The open school seemed to be a good indicator; when it closed it would be a signal that it was time to 'get out of Iran.'

The sounds of machine guns and explosions were getting closer to us each night. One evening, our neighbor across the 'kucheh,' small street, stood on his roof top, putting him level with our apartment. He shouted at

the top of his voice facing, in turn, all four directions, “Allah-u-Akhbar.” Over and over he praised his god. His voice rang out through the night sky, piercing into and through our bedrooms from some forty to fifty feet away. As he faced our windows, he boomed out his praise/prayer/announcement/threat; and it was aimed right at us — our ears, our emotion, our fears, our heart.

Our youngest girl, Robin, ran from her bedroom and crawled into our bed as we lay side by side on our stomachs watching the man on his roof. She squeezed in between us as the hair-raising phrase boomed out, hitting its target, “Allah-u-Akhbar!” She said, “I believe I can see better in here,” as she nuzzled up beside me.

From then on, nothing got better. The dark skies were lit up with multiple blasts. The rat-a-tat-tat of the many machine guns penetrated every hour of the night, and the shouting of marchers allowed no rest for anyone. We were in a nation shaking with the force of revolution!

One evening after the BHI bus brought me home, Sylvia and I climbed the stairs and walked out onto our roof. Facing downtown Tehran three miles away, we could see dark columns of smoke rising from the streets. The dark smoke indicated the fires were coming from petroleum. Cars and buses and trucks were overturned and set afire to mark the protests, and buildings were burned.

Those nights of terror continued until Christmas. We did set up a plastic Christmas tree we acquired from a departing American in order to give the girls a semblance of calm and security, but it had become clear that our days as a family in Tehran were numbered.

My Bell manager’s bus was stoned and turned over, then burned. All the passengers ran away and got other rides to work. On one bus ride to the lab, Iranian young people threw rocks at us shouting, “Bargh-bar-Amrika,” death to America! We got through with no casualties, but keeping our minds on our work was near impossible.

Even the Iranians in the lab were having a difficult time maintaining focus on the job, telling us they were marching during the night. That was evident because they would almost fall asleep at the analytical instruments they were running.

We were in a dilemma. We were training people who were protesting against the Shah, who was paying our salary. This complicated circle of thought could not be brought into clear focus. Where were we personally headed?

None of us could know what was happening in Washington, in Paris, in Iraq, in Yemen. What was on the mind of Jimmy Carter? Khomeini? The young Saddam Hussein? The young Osama bin Laden? Impressionable minds of these latter two visionaries were indeed being influenced.

The world did not know at that time that these events in Tehran and Paris, with encouragement by those in Washington, were laying the foundation for terror attacks on American interests by fanatic and extreme Muslim leaders. The known threat to all of us Americans in Iran at that time was Russian communism. The Iran communists, Tudeh Party, were few in number, but their propaganda campaigns against the U.S. and the West prepared the minds for uprisings of Muslims against the highly resented American super power.

The Iranians who were dedicated to fundamentalist Islam did not want to be told how to live, what to do, how to dress, how to accept infidels! They wanted to live as an Islamic state, without freedom of worship, or freedom of the press, or freedom of speech. They preferred to have a life where the men dominated the women, and where all non-Muslims were treated as second- and third-class people. They wanted the laws of Islam to be the rule, with no influence from the western culture or America.

That was their way and they were comfortable with it. The Shah had changed too much too fast. He was modernizing Iran, and the populace did not want that done as it was being done. They believed their women were dressed immodestly and looked as though they were ‘harlots.’ They were forced to tolerate American Christians and Jews. These sinful and ‘damned unbelievers’ were forced on them. They had rather die in the company of pigs and dogs than humans, which the Shah had welcomed into their homeland.

Khomeini was preaching “the truth” and they wanted him back from his exile in France. They worked themselves into frenzies every night, and the protests were becoming more common in daylight hours. It was not unusual to see marchers from the vantage point of our buses on the way to work. The shouts were clear, “Bargh-bar-Amrika! Bargh-bar-Carter! Bargh-bar-Shah!” The Revolution was at its peak in December 1978.

During those days I was studying Farsi at the University of Tehran in downtown Tehran. I rode a bus from work in the BHI laboratory two nights each week to try to learn to read and write their script. My enrollment ended extremely pointedly one night. As I arrived at the university gate a guard armed with a bayoneted rifle stepped in front of me, block-

ing my entrance. I showed him my student pass, but he simply said, “Go home.”

I insisted I was a student, only there to study. He lowered the bayonet and touched my belt with the tip. “Go home,” he repeated firmly and very seriously. I did an about face and started walking down the street. I knew there were no buses running and that the orange taxis were not readily picking up foreigners in those days. I started walking, wondering if the soldier’s words meant ‘go home’ to my house in Seyyed Khan Dahn or ‘home to Texas.’ I imagined that he really meant the latter.

After about a block and a half of walking, a ‘civilian car,’ as the locals called the privately owned car, pulled up beside me. The driver leaned toward me and asked if he could take me ‘some place.’ He spoke English clearly, but the word someplace concerned me. First, what place did he have in mind, and second, did I want him to know where I lived?

At any rate, one man in a car seemed less of a threat than the streets of that highly charged city at night at that time. I accepted his offer and got in. He confessed to being a pro-Shah follower, but without ability to do anything to help. He predicted that the Shah would soon be gone. I felt that he was right. He got me to my street and would take no pay for the ride. I thanked him and wished him well.

That evening we stood on our roof watching the gunfire flashes and listening to the regular explosions, hearing the sounds of revolution from several locations around us. We could see numerous tall cranes, several stories high, abandoned as the construction work of erecting skyscrapers and high rise apartment buildings had ceased weeks earlier. Contrasted with those signs of progress were the black plumes of smoke rising from downtown, symbolizing destruction had replaced construction. A return to the past was inevitable and apparently was the will of the fundamental Muslims believers.

Near nighttime we counted sixteen columns of smoke rising in the darkening sky. Perhaps there were more we could not see, for many city lights were not lit due to the ever increasing and more widely reaching power outages.

I held Sylvia close to me. We both knew she would soon be going home, and I would be staying in Tehran alone, without her and the girls. I turned her toward me and kissed her as Tehran crumbled around us. Our life also came down at that time, because we would not only lose our time together, but the work with the church we had labored so hard to

build would be scattered. We believed, although we would never know, that some of the members would be persecuted, imprisoned, or killed... or even worse!

Our life came down that night, and we would have to build again all we had lost in the years of subsistence pay of a missionary. Working at BHI less than a year, the savings we had accumulated nowhere near covered the heavy losses we had sustained in giving up everything material in order to make this sojourn to try to tell this Muslim population about Christ so that they might have eternal life. It was clear, also, that I would not be in Tehran much longer, but if I left of my own volition even the small bonus I had earned for eight months of work would have been forfeited.

We agreed for Sylvia to go on ahead when conditions worsened to the point that there was no longer any choice. Without my help, she would have to find a place to live and a job to last until I could get out and settled back into the U.S. with a job. She was prepared to do her part, and I was set to stay on in Iran until BHI ordered me home. We both clenched our teeth with determination, knowing only that having our family separated this way was going to rip us apart. As hard as anything else was not knowing what was ahead on either side of the ocean, and when our separation would begin.

Chapter Twenty

Our Christmas, Celebrated Privately Behind Walls

In the chaos of the intense revolution of the people against the Shah it was next to impossible for the Tehran American School administration to keep the school functioning normally. To the great credit of their big, strong-minded superintendent, Bill Keogh, they did just that right up to the end of the presence of American ‘non-essentials’ in Iran.

During those days of escalating violence the school was operated as normally as possible. The children gathered at the corner of our kucheher to ride the school bus. If the bus did not arrive within a reasonable length of time the children returned to their homes, but that did not happen often.

Arriving home from school one afternoon Robin was a bit upset when she and all the other students had to lie on the floor of the bus as they were returned to their homes. Armed guards rode the buses for the protection of the students; and they had ordered them to lie down to prevent anyone from provoking to anger those who held the anti-American sentiment all over the city.

The T.A.S. students in the drama club had planned to perform in Cairo, Egypt, in a competition with other American schools throughout the Middle East. Our daughter, Beth, was one of the actresses selected to go on the trip, but she and the others feared the troupe would be unable to attend the event because of the trouble in Tehran. She prepared and rehearsed her part in the play, “Plaza Suite” and wanted that trip very deeply.

In preparation for their travel they had to have their documents in order. Beth and a couple of friends decided to hire a taxi to go to an office several miles north of T.A.S. to get the required papers. They were en route when gunfire broke out around them. The driver did not want to proceed, but Beth, not easily deterred by mere gunfire, hit the driver on his shoulder and firmly and loudly demanded in Farsi that he go on and hurry, “Zud Bawsh!” He did.

His passengers crouched below window level in the back of the taxi, and they sped through the hail of gunshots. No one was hurt, and the three students succeeded in the mission to get the necessary papers.

A few days into December the school called the parents of the

young thespians together to explain their decision to allow the trip to be made to Cairo. The danger was in Iran, not in Egypt; therefore, they felt the traveling students would be safe. Mehrabad Airport remained open, and transportation for Americans to and from the airport was readily available. The show would go on, as long as the parents approved. All of us agreed and the trip got underway.

Beth did go and had a tremendous time both on stage and on sight-seeing across the city of Cairo. The troupe of young actors even shared the thrill of riding Arabian horses in the desert outside the city and within sight of the pyramids and Sphinx.

As we got word of their successful arrival and performance in Egypt, we also realized things were getting worse in Iran. The serious word came down to us that it was becoming clearer and more certain that the Shah was not going to survive, as the will of the masses grew stronger and more violent.

Each morning in Cairo the group was gathered together with news from Tehran. Families were leaving Tehran and sending instructions to their children in Egypt to meet them in the States or somewhere in Europe. Beth was not surprised when the message came from her parents, "Hope you are having a great time. See you when you get back."

Although we were not fearful of Beth returning to Tehran with her school group — at any rate, the half of it that was left to come back to — we were concerned about Diana coming into a place which had changed so much it was not recognizable and one with which she would be totally unfamiliar. She was scheduled to make a Christmas visit to be with us during her break from college at Lubbock, Texas. I had tried numerous times to get a phone call through to her but was unsuccessful in all attempts, as the phone lines were cut off.

When I did finally reach her to tell her not to come, I repeated it three or four times so there would be no doubt that we did not want her to make the trip. Although the connection was poor and neither of us could hear well, I heard her weak voice tell me, "Well, I wasn't sure what to do, but I was preparing to come even if I had to go around several times before landing." That settled, we then were only concerned with getting Beth back in country and at home.

As Sylvia and I continued to evaluate all our options for our children and ourselves, we sized up what was in the balance at this time. We realized our four children were on four continents during some of the days

leading up to Christmas. Beth was in North Africa on her trip with the school; Diana was in North America in college; Robin was with us in Asia; and Don was in South America, where he was involved in a church-planting mission with Bob Brown in Caracas, Venezuela. Our family was as spread out as our lives were strung out in those days!

When Beth returned to Tehran the school drivers brought her with the group to the school, where we picked her up. Her happiness and enthusiasm contrasted sharply with the somber and serious tone the Americans in the city had taken on since the T.A.S. troupe had been gone the last few days.

She teared up as one of the first things she said was, “The Shayyad Monument was covered in black.” Many protestors spraying slogans all over the huge structure representing the dynasty of the Shah, who they sensed was soon leaving the land, had virtually masked the famed monument. The graffiti derided and insulted the history and life of the Shah’s family, although that family had contributed greatly to the growth and prosperity of the nation.

Christmas break was rapidly approaching. Only three months before, the students of T.A.S. had to share lockers, but by the Christmas school holidays these same lockers were empty in great part. Americans were leaving for the States and taking the T.A.S. student body home with them.

T.A.S. was the largest American overseas school, and the terrific experiences of the school life there had been very good for Beth. She recalled some of them, in particular. In the three months before going to Egypt she enjoyed being in the drama club. She was chosen to act the part of Antonia, niece of Don Quixote in the school play of the same name. Due to curfew it was hard for the students to find a place and time to practice after school and get home before 9:00 pm, the time when the curfew went into effect. Beth was always prepared with her toothbrush in her purse as she left for school each morning. If she saw she was unable to be home by 9:00 she called and assured us she would be staying the night in one of the teacher’s flats near the school.

Those nights were fun and just a bit ‘dangerous’ as the students stayed in the buildings across from one another. A male teacher had all the boys in his flat across the kuche from the female teacher who allowed girls to spend the night with her. The students arranged a clothesline tied across the kuche to send notes and ‘stuff’ to one another. Beth decided

one night to take something across the kучeh. She made it to one side, but upon her return an armed ‘gendarme’ patrolling the street stopped her and strongly admonished her to get inside the building. She quickly did.

While I was working at Bell Helicopter and the children were in school, Sylvia was searching for food that was becoming much harder to find. Milk was especially scarce. One morning a milk truck pulled up beside a kучeh store. The Iranian women surrounded the truck, grabbing cartons of milk. Sylvia recalled the old saying, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.” She was not in Rome, but the principle still fit, “When in Iran, do as the Iranians do.” She elbowed in, grabbing the milk as quickly as the other women. As each woman retrieved her carton she simply laid rials (about 20 cents per rial) on the counter just inside the store and left. No one asked questions. No one said anything. Families needed milk, and the women went out and got it.

In another kучeh store Sylvia was shopping and found one container of bleach. What a find! She picked it up, hid it under her coat, took her other items to the line before the counter to pay and leave as quickly as possible. She had learned to keep her head down and say as little as necessary. Not only was her Farsi far from perfect, but also her Texas accent gave her away at her first utterance.

While standing in line a lady behind her observed the bleach not completely covered. She asked Sylvia in Farsi, “Where did you get the bleach?” Sylvia just shrugged her shoulders and kept focused on the counter to pay for her goods. More than once the lady addressed Sylvia. Finally in perfect English, she asked Sylvia, “Where did you get the bleach?” The two then had a conversation about the scarcity of goods, but Sylvia did not give up her bleach. The Iranian lady commented to Sylvia, “You are brave to come out shopping. Even I normally do not come out. I send a maid.”

When T.A.S. closed for Christmas break the school looked like a ghost town. Beth knew if it did reopen in January many of her friends would not return. She so very much wanted to graduate from T.A.S. on the Embassy grounds as her brother had done four years before. During Christmas break she would return to the campus to work on the school annual. On the days she wanted to go, Sylvia would often walk the distance from the flat to the school leaving Robin in the flat if she did not want to walk with them.

On one occasion there were three young men at the corner where Sylvia and Beth turned to enter the school campus. With Beth safely inside

the school walls, Sylvia walked back by the young men. She had hoped they would be gone. She did not want them to know where Beth lived in case they might have had bad intentions toward her tall, beautiful American daughter. Sylvia walked passed the three, stopped in a kuche store, made some purchases, and returned to the street. The men were still there.

As she passed them they stepped from the corner and surrounded her. Unpleasant thoughts ran through her head, “Are they going to taunt me, tease me, accost me, assault me, will I ever see my family again, no one really knows where I am, what if they hurt me, or attack me, or kill me?”

Actually no one did know where she was; Beth was in the school just yards away. Robin was in the apartment less than a mile away. I was at work miles away. What was she to do? She stood with her head down trying to put into perspective her situation. One young man asked, “Are you an American?”

Sylvia’s head came up, and looking him square in the eye, she affirmed, loudly and boldly, “YES! I AM AN AMERICAN!”

He then meekly and with a sincere hope asked, “Can you help me get to America?” Relief flooded through her veins, and weakness almost made her collapse. She wanted to laugh, as her fear was replaced by jubilation, but instead, she discussed the impossibility of her being able to help him or his friends.

Those kinds of new and odd things took much of our time from day to day, but the thinking time became filled with the thoughts of what happens ‘after Tehran?’ It was obvious that it was about over for the foreign families in Iran. But there was one more thing we wanted badly to do...celebrate Christmas with our families.

Christmas was not at all a public celebration ever in that already extremely intolerant Muslim culture, but that year it was especially wise to keep any display quiet and secret. No one wanted to incite any additional violence by showing a Christmas tree, even through a window. Although we had a nice tree decorated well with gifts stacked underneath, it was near the back of our sitting room and hidden from any outside view.

Our landlord on the first floor below us, however, was able to see a bit of our tree through the atrium extending from his ground floor apartment up through the middle of ours. The atrium was enclosed in glass, and we often saw each other doing work around the house or just living in our individual homes, they looking up at us and we glancing down at them.

The owner of the house came up one night, giving Sylvia quite a lump in her throat thinking he might be going to make a charge against the Christmas tree he could easily see through the atrium. She did realize the potential danger it could cause him if the authorities saw him allowing a tenant to have a tree celebrating Christmas. Rather than criticism he made a simple request, "I just wanted my daughter to see a Christmas tree; would you mind if we came in?"

We only prayed he would not divulge our secret, knowing his actions could well be deceptive. But he did not. He was one of the many Muslims we met who was a good and peace-loving citizen.

We exchanged our family gifts, but our yuletide season captured only half-hearted joy on the parts of all four of the ones of us in our family who were experiencing these last days together. We knew the walls of our life in Tehran were crumbling. In a short while we knew they would be flattened, leading us to ponder the immediate future and wonder where we might be on the next Christmas? Would we be together? Where? We celebrated quietly, secretly as we thought on all those things.

Chapter Twenty-One

Tehran American School Closes... for Good!

Soon after Christmas the word came, “T.A.S. is closing!” That was our signal. Sylvia and Beth and Robin would be leaving Tehran for the United States quickly. We planned and packed hastily. Sylvia would take what they could put into suitcases and, if we were quick enough, the U.S. Embassy would take the remaining items in cargo shipments.

We began packing things in the same trunks we had used for bringing our possessions to Tehran. We had a very good friend in the embassy who said he would have an embassy ‘wagon’ come to our apartment and pick up our belongings to be shipped to Texas. Before Sylvia left we had fourteen suitcases and trunks ready and numbered in paint on the outside. They could be picked up ‘at any time,’ we told our friend.

The embassy set the date for dependents, and any others who would be departing, to assemble at the Royal Tehran Hilton Hotel. The instructions were given for the staging of the mass exodus. We arranged for two private taxis to pick up Sylvia and the girls on January 1, 1979, with the entire amount of luggage they could carry on the Pan American Airways plane. It would depart the next day after the family spent one night in the hotel. On January 2, their flight would take them to New York and on down to Dallas, Texas.

In addition, Sylvia had agreed to take the standard size poodle that belonged to our friends in the Embassy. They were afraid she might have to be left to the devices of the Iranians, who consider dogs to be unclean. They could imagine a terrible death for ‘Missy,’ and were pleased that Sylvia could evacuate her with the three of them.

Her cage was among Sylvia’s belongings as they drove away from our front door. Missy was drugged to ease her anxiety of the situation of cages and new place at the hotel and then the ride to the airport and plane ride, all caged up. I followed in the second car with the bags that could not be packed in the lead car.

As we pulled up to the hotel entrance it was evident why the Hilton had been selected. Along with the usual amenities of this four-star chain, it was built on a high knoll with walls not easy to scale. Guards with rifles

were all around with the capability of looking down on anyone advancing toward the hotel from any direction. In other words, it was defensible to some degree from an angry mob. In those days, that had real meaning.

We unloaded the suitcases and registered Sylvia at the desk. We got them situated in their room for the one night stay; and I returned to our apartment. I would return next morning to see them off in a long caravan to the airport.

As I ascended the stairs on the outside of our apartment, the strong, heavy realization hit me. . . my wife and daughters were here a short while ago; and they would never be here again. I recalled a time when I had told Sylvia how to make an emergency escape from the apartment out the back, swinging down from the window on clothes. I asked her if she would be able to throw a ‘Molotov cocktail’ onto this very staircase if she were forced to do so to save her life or those of the girls. She had nodded, and I believed she would have done it without hesitation. I showed her as best I could how I would suggest she do it, using kerosene with which we cooked and a glass jar with a rag stuck under the screw top lid. She had listened, imagining the scene in reality.

The rush of memories was broken by the sound of a neighbor calling up. I knew she was a BHI worker, but I did not know her name, nor did she know mine. She spoke English well, and asked if my family had left. I simply said, “Yes,” not wanting to talk about the evacuation plan. She said she was Deniz.

She worked her way up the stairs and asked if I was leaving also. When I told her that I would leave later, she wanted to know if there was anything I could do to help her leave Iran and go to America. She was afraid that she would be punished because of her close association with BHI and the Americans. I could not assure her she would not, but at the same time I had no way of helping her get out.

She wanted to come inside in order “not to be seen,” but I felt a genuine concern and told her she should get back off the streets and into her home. She wanted to talk about it more and asked me to try and help her. Feeling some anxiety about what extreme she might go to in order to get me to help her, I told her I would see what I could do through Bell. She left, but said she would come back later. That was not a comforting thought.

As I went inside I looked at the things we had in the apartment. These were the things my wife had arranged and the signs of my family

were on everything in every room. Sadness is not a strong enough word to describe my thoughts; in fact, there may not be a word to define how I felt at that time. I had no idea what was ahead. I would be at the hotel early tomorrow morning to see my family leave in a long convoy to the airport; but then I would have these seven rooms to myself without water, lights, phone, or heat. That January was cold and promised to be the coldest I had ever experienced.

The next day my family and I clung to each other as they waited to get onto their assigned bus. Sylvia told me that Missy, our friend's dog, had run away from them as they took her out of the cage for some exercise, but then she had scurried back to them across the hotel lobby, leaving little sprinkles of "wet" due to her nervousness. Since that crisis they kept her tranquilized. This whole effort to get her to the States was a bit of a sacrifice on Sylvia's part, but Missy, we learned, lived 8 more happy years in Virginia, near the nation's capitol.

Tears ran down the faces of my three beautiful girls, and my own eyes clouded as we kissed goodbye and they boarded the bus. I was not permitted to follow the convoy. They were on their own. I felt depressed, but relieved at the thought of their safety and security coming up very soon.

I later read of the "exodus by caravan" in Time magazine, which we could always buy in the drugstores in Tehran even if they were a few days late. One line commented on the humor of one resentful American who wrote on the mud-smeared back window of one of the buses, "Khomeini eats pork chops," an allusion to the fact that Muslims considered pork to be unclean. With my wife and girls in that caravan, I failed to see the humor in such an insulting comment.

As I rode back to the now silent apartment I was lost, alone, empty. I only knew the flights were to leave within three hours, but I was not able to know for sure when they left.

What was the future to hold for my family, BHI, Iran?

Chapter Twenty-Two

A Pepsi Cola Truck Rumbles through the Snow

Living in our cold quiet apartment in Seyyed Khan Dahn with no cooking oil, no heat, no phone (much of the time), no lights (most of the time), caused me to look into what was going on in my life and in the ancient historically exotic land serving as my home. How badly I missed the family, but knowing they were safely out of the turmoil that had embraced Tehran assured me it was right that they were not with me.

Bell Helicopter International was one company which was resented and hated by the anti-Shah fundamentalists because we furnished and serviced the helicopters of the Shah and his military. Anything or anyone giving help or support to the regime of the Shah was an enemy to the people.

The people were emotional and pretty greatly confused, being pulled by the communist Tudeh Party and the dictates of the Ayatollah Khomeini in Paris, demanding that the Shah be dethroned at any cost. The hard tough embattled old man stirred the vital emotions of the masses of Iranian people, telling how horrible were the immorality and greed of America and Jimmy Carter...and the entire West in general. Certainly his ambition to lead Iran back to the true way of Islam drove him to preach a deep hate of the 'devils' of the West.

The government of France was complicit in his cause by allowing him to live in ease in that country, but being as fair as possible to that government and its decisions, there was no way to foresee where this Muslim upheaval would lead. The hate words of one of the highest-ranking men in all Islam were being beamed across all air ways and sent to all Muslims of the world. His words were as important to them as the words of the Pope were to Catholics around the world. They pretty well told them what to think and believe. His words caused an entire nation of thirty five million people (and indeed others) to act with unfettered violence. This man turned people into many rebellious waves of force bent on the destruction of their own semi-modern culture and ripping apart the physical infrastructure.

Their actions were directed at one thing: ridding Iran of the Shah. This was the primary objective and main "target" of the Ayatollah in his vengeful quest.

We talked about this daily in our laboratory at BHI. Every morning was a guess regarding who would “show up” for work that day. The main two technicians for whom I was furnishing on-the-job training to do analyses in my part of the Spectrographic Oil Analysis Program (S.O.A.P.) were trying to walk a line between pro- and anti-Shah.

In order to keep their jobs and income they had to talk pro-Shah in the lab, but it was apparent that they marched in protests at night by the things they knew and by their eyes showing signs of little or no sleep on several occasions.

It began to seem that our work was in vain. So what, if they learned their jobs? BHI was not going to be around long if the people had their way. Even at that time there were minor protests against our operations. The day the tanks backed into the BHI compound where our lab was located made it clear that we were in the sights of the protests. The guns were aimed at the gates I used to come into work each morning. I hoped I would never hear those guns go off.

In fact, we had no real plan of escape or protection. We felt vulnerable, as our lab was only a few feet from a public street outside our compound. The instructions BHI did give us were primarily to keep a very low profile in public and to stay in our homes unless it was absolutely essential to be outside. Regarding riding the bus to work, the word we had was to wait at the bus stop for a BHI bus no longer than 15 minutes past the time it was scheduled to pick us up, then if it had not come, we were to go back home and stay there until the next morning.

We were not to try to get to work by any other mode of transportation. Our friends, Charles and Allene Kuhn, had decided to pull out in December. They concluded that it was a hopeless cause and too perilous to stay on. I considered departing before BHI ordered me out, but I was there to do a job and I believed there would be time to leave when the company ordered it.

BHI shook the tree often to see what “apples would fall.” Daily they reminded workers that they could leave Iran if they felt their lives were endangered. People did leave regularly. I chose to stay because I wanted to be with the very small remnant of the church as long as possible, I wanted the bonus to which I was entitled to receive from BHI only if I did not break the contract of one year, and I made up my mind I would not run away again, having evacuated during the war years between India and Pakistan, and having evacuated during Hurricane Carla back in Texas in 1961.

I think I just got tired of being run off from what I was doing! Was I going to run all my life? I decided that I was not; but I was not planning to hesitate when BHI gave the word to go.

A few days after Sylvia left, my friend at the embassy came with a van driver to help me load our things into the vehicle. His generosity, in part, was in return for my wife and girls agreeing to take their dog, Missy, back to the U.S. on their departure from Tehran. But we had all become friends while we worked in Tehran under the extremely stressful conditions, and it was out of that friendship that we helped each other. The help was very much appreciated whatever the motive, as the trunks were heavy and had to be taken down a flight of stairs.

We hastily carried, slid, and dropped the fourteen densely packed trunks as we struggled to get them down the stairs and into the waiting vehicle. We worked quickly, as all things seemed urgent during those days. As soon as we had loaded them in the van it sped away, destined for the Royal Tehran Hilton Hotel and on from there the next day to the airport for the ride (hopefully) back to DFW Airport in Texas. I could only hope our goods would get out. No one could guarantee anything; but the chances were better with the embassy resources than any other way.

I thanked my friend and wished him well, not sure we would ever see each other again, and surely just as uncertain about even seeing him in Tehran, as it really was coming apart politically and physically at that point. He shook my hand and tried to assure me that he would do all he could to keep me informed as well as possible, as the news reached the embassy more readily than BHI. That, in itself, was not an easy task.

I dug in for the frosty cold of the January Tehran weather and the rising heat of the revolution. In fact, every night the blasts and gunfire grew closer and more intense, as the snow fell on the city. The streets became hazardous with the snowfall causing them to become extremely slick, and it was much more dangerous nightly with the many bursts of bullets from the guns of the Shah raining down frequently on the mobs.

People in the streets had been marching by night for months, and now they protested en masse even by day. The decision had been made by the military that they were going to put an end to the rebellion, and the people were being shot down by the hundreds. I wondered how these soldiers could shoot into the waves of people. Indeed as the tide began to turn steadily and ominously against the Shah that month, many soldiers did break with the army and go over to the other side with the people.

As I sat home at night and during the days I did not get to go to work, I wrote the things I heard and saw, concluding in my mind that I was catching the mood of the populace to the best of my ability. I tried to pen the frame of my own mind, which itself was not a clear focus from which to work. Things were unlike they had ever been in my life. Nothing was a constant and no pattern was being established. All was in turmoil, chaos.

I thought once as I saw a long line of people at a pomp-e-benzin (gas station) that the communists were going to sweep down out of Russia and take over after the Shah was driven out. It seemed inevitable that he could not stand against the stronger and stronger will of the growing revolutionary, single-minded force of the people, his subjects, and the ones over whom he had ruled for so many years.

I saw these people as being ignorant of the dangers enwrapped in the things they were doing. The Shah had protected them against the atheistic doctrine of Moscow, and now they were playing right into the Russians' hands. There were so many different forces involved in the growing conflict.

In the first two weeks of January 1979, I worked a total of three days at BHI. The rest of the time I stayed home in the wintry cold. Most of the time I was involved in three things: I rushed to the drug store for Time and Newsweek magazines once each week, and to the grocery store for whatever I could find on the shelves to buy and eat. Some days I would run across the street to one of two American neighbors where we would share news and the magazines and eat together.

The thing I spent most of my time doing at home was writing on my daily observations for my journal of notes or letters to send to Sylvia via BHI's mail pouch, which was flown out daily.

On a few occasions my older neighbors from Alabama, who lived two doors down the street from us, invited me to eat with them and play the board game of Risk. I thought the military game was appropriate for our situation. It provided a good diversion from the real world of live bullets in which we all found ourselves. When I had stayed as long as I felt appropriate I would announce that I needed to leave when the man's Mexican wife would find all kinds of reasons for me to stay. I believed that she was scared of what they were doing.

The Alabama man, also a BHI worker, was a very determined, one might say, 'bull headed' man. He said he was going to "wait out the revolution;" and he was buying up available housefuls of furniture the Ameri-

cans were leaving as they departed. His wife asked me what I thought about that; and I told them straight, "I will leave when BHI says leave." The lady warmly received that, but the man was not moved, and allowed me to go with very little more conversation.

When I sat at home and wrote, I would do it in the kitchen with the door closed to keep the warmth in as much as possible. I sat on a lawn chair with an open weave seat, under which I placed a large burning Christmas candle to keep myself as warm as I could. Then, I pulled a quilt up around me and over my head, letting it drape around my chair to direct the candle heat up onto my body. Two other candles on the table provided the light by which I wrote.

It was around 40 degrees on the outside with the light snow flurries through those days, and the inside of my house seemed just as cold. This arrangement allowed me as much comfort as I could have and be as productive as I could be.

The rare days I could get the bus to work provided some break from my cold routine. On one occasion, as I stood in the snow on the corner where my bus picked me up, I heard the rumbling of a vehicle around the corner. It was heavier than my bus and the sound was quite different. There was not one other vehicle to be seen or heard on the snow-covered streets. Since the time was almost up for the bus to come I felt it was something BHI had provided to get us to the job...either that, or perhaps a military vehicle. In either event, my attention was glued in the direction of the sound of that motor about to appear rounding the corner.

I was amazed to see through the snow a Pepsi Cola truck carrying its cargo to destinations in our neighborhood. The surprise to me was hilarious. With the deadly action going on in that city and filling all our minds, to see that truck with its driver dedicated to faithfully carry out his task was as refreshing as the drink he bore.

This was a part of my company back in Texas, as Pepsi Cola was the parent company at that time of Frito-Lay, Inc., snack food manufacturer worldwide. I couldn't wait to write a letter back to my friends at Frito-Lay's research department to tell them of this morning and that lone truck plowing through the snow!

The bus did not come, and later in the afternoon I decided I wanted to cook something or at least warm up something to eat. I got my kerosene can and walked to the 'gas pump,' as Americans called them, to buy cooking oil.

As usual the long line wound around a corner of a small street, a kучeh, intersecting the main thoroughfare, Saltanatabad. I quietly started to queue up with the others holding their five-gallon cans. Soldiers protecting the gas pump began eyeing me closely. I did feel very conspicuous, towering over mostly women in the queue.

There were some gunshots that rang out from some distance away, and the soldiers ordered us to disperse. They were breaking up our line to get us away from the area of the oil supply onto an open street. The people were reluctant to leave a line in which they had stood for no telling how long, maybe hours.

I also hung back, not wanting to lose the gains I had made to get my oil. The soldiers meant it. They shouted again for us to go back to our homes. I was not sure what all they were saying, but I knew they must be threatening us, because this time the throng of people broke up and ran in all directions. Several ran down the kучeh in the direction of my apartment. I decided to run, too, as the people raced away.

As I headed down my narrow kучeh, lined with multistory buildings, the soldiers shouted some order, I assumed. They began firing rifle shots over our heads, and I put my long Texas legs in high gear. In my most serious haste I began passing those little ladies in their flowing chadors.

I ran all the way home, panting heavily as I climbed my front steps. I unlocked my door and entered, thinking about the cold cans of food I might open for supper. My supply was beginning to run down, and I seriously wondered if I would just simply run out of food.

On January 16, I caught the BHI bus and went to work, not knowing the worldwide and historical significance that day would hold a few hours after my work began in the lab.

Chapter Twenty-Three

The Shah Flies Himself from Tehran

Before noon the lab manager, Harry Smith, called us together near his office. His eyes revealed a seriousness I had never seen in him. He said, "This is expected to be a very big day in Iran. We are closing the facilities now for the rest of the day, and you are directed to go to your home and stay inside. The buses will not take you today; you are on your own. You will have to get home any way you can. Leave now and get there as quickly as you can. We wish you well. Remember, stay in your homes."

I looked Harry in the face, wanting him to tell me exactly what was going on. He looked at me and said, "Go home now." I had no idea what he meant, but I knew him well enough to know to leave!

As chance would have it, our female Iranian supervisor-in-training walked out the lab door just as I did, and she asked if I had a ride home. I told her that I did not, and she said, "You can ride with me." I accepted her extremely kind, and I might say 'courageous' offer, considering the circumstances and the potential danger of an Iranian woman being seen in the company of an American male. We raced across the grounds to her car, parked near the exit gate.

As we sped through the gate we realized the streets were filling with speeding cars, more reckless than usual. The lady and I were the only ones in the car as she negotiated her way through those bustling streets, expertly and with aplomb that comes only with one having long experience driving in Tehran. She knew the rules of the street, which can be summed up simply by the statement, "Do whatever you want to do."

It worked because everyone did it and expected others to do it. Even pedestrians knew how to maneuver to avoid getting run down. Their term for 'traffic jam' is the same as the word used for 'chaos,' sholuq (pronounced "show luke.") It was appropriate always, but most particularly on this day.

"What do you think is going on?," I asked the intent driver. She answered in Farsi, and I understood, "Nay-mee-doo-nahm. Boh-zor-geh," I don't know, but it is big!

I knew the way home from BHI and I also expected those streets

to be packed with the excess of cars on the road, as did this calm driver in whose hands my safety rested, as I analyzed my predicament.

We mostly just observed the assembling of people along the streets and the rush of cars, with very few words passing between us. She chose our route well, but when we approached the last major intersection before reaching our neighborhood, she looked at me and said, "I think we had better get out of the car here and go on foot."

That major intersection, Seyyed Khan Dahn, was jammed with several hundred people shouting and cheering and laughing. She looked at me and with obvious concern said, "Do not stay on the streets. Go quickly to your home. Be careful and good luck."

As we both abandoned the car we quickly waded into the rapidly growing, but already huge, crowd filling the six-point intersection where the major streets of the area come together, about six blocks from both our homes. The exuberant crowd swelled as people poured into the mix from every street, and every direction. I tried to make my way through the mass of humanity as the supervisor who brought me as far as she could faded into the mob. She vanished right into the clamoring people, something I was unable to do because they all stood about a foot shorter than I and they looked a good deal darker than this relatively fair-skinned American. The people were celebrating happily and boisterously. I just kept my eyes down and moved toward a flower shop across the sea of big-eyed faces on the furthest side of the streets. A friend of mine owned it.

As I worked through the crowd I saw a military truck slowly pushing its way into the middle of the intersection, presumably with orders to keep peace. Instead, the soldiers inside got out of the truck and joined the dancing in the streets. Two of them climbed up on the hood and began dancing. One of them pulled the windshield wipers away from the glass and attached a white carnation to each wiper. The switch was turned on and the wipers swayed back and forth adorned with the flowers. Their rhythm was virtually in perfect time with the sounds of the chanting people.

I could not understand the slogans they were shouting in unison, but I could hear the name of the Shah. Was he dead? Captured? I could not determine.

As I reached the flower shop, I saw my friend inside, Mr. Tehrani. He was selling carnations to a lady, who pushed by me to hand them out to individuals all around the front of the shop. I stood at the door until Mr. Tehrani saw me. I hesitated to enter, fearing my presence in his shop

would put his life in danger, or at least cause a scene in which he or others might be injured. He was a friend, but the ones outside might have no mercy on him or me if they decided to deride me, an American.

He said in English, "Come in. Come in!"

I hastily entered, and he moved me behind a rack full of flowers, concealing me in part. I asked him what the massive celebration was about and where it might lead. He looked surprised that I didn't know and said, "The Shah is gone." Being a devout Muslim he was happy to have the high ranking Ayatollah Khomeini indicating he would return from France to take control of Iran, but he was also a wise man and worried that the instability of the times could damage the economy badly.

Many things came instantly to my mind. What does it mean for me? Do I stay? Do I get out...quickly, or wait? Do I work? Do I go to jail? Do I get killed? Do I ever get home to see my family again?

One thing I did feel for certain, "It is not safe for me or for that matter, any other non-Muslim foreigner in Iran."

Thinking I might be endangering his life, I asked him if I should leave his shop, telling him I thought it might be safer for him if I were not there. "No," he said; "but stay away from the windows. Go to the back; stay out of sight."

About that time, the little old lady came back for more flowers. This time she bought a dozen or so, and went back outside to distribute them to the celebrators. My eyes followed her out, and I noted that the flower recipients waved them in time with the chanting and dancing and the windshield wipers, moving back and forth.

When I peered out the windows as discreetly as my excitement would allow, I watched the happy smiles spread wide across every face. They were genuinely happy. The one they called the 'puppet of America,' the 'murderer,' the 'tyrant,' the 'merciless,' was gone!

They felt they had been victorious after years of struggle. It represented the achieving of a singular goal. Their country was free. The Ayatollah Khomeini was sure to come back soon, and take from the Shah the rule the country of Iran. The constant thoughts of the people had to have been that Allah was surely pleased and must certainly have guided these events...

"Allah Be Praised."

These thoughts were on the minds of the millions of Iranians. The

emotion filled the hearts of the populace all over the country, but could not have been felt stronger anywhere than right here in the celebration taking place mere hundreds of feet from my apartment, my home.

As I watched from behind the flowers I felt anxious, a good bit apprehensive, and somewhat afraid. Mostly, however, I felt pity and sympathy for the people and their future. I believed fully that the Russian Communists would soon overrun the country and lay claim to Iran as a part of their union. No longer could we consider Iran any degree of ally or friend. The Russians would have the oil, the land, and the naval bases on the Persian Gulf. None of those thoughts could be considered good for the relationship we had so long had with them, for now or for the future.

I could see these people, many of whom had been very warm and hospitable to my family and me, under the yoke of communist rule and burden, trying to worship their god, but answering to an atheistic government. If they thought the Shah was bad, they were in for a really bad surprise if the non-believing Russian power took control.

They believed the Ayatollah would come; I believed Russia would come. In my mind neither option seemed very good for the populace.

I watched outside as several men walked by, holding up Iranian money that had quarter-size holes torn out of the middle of the bills, the Shah's image had been removed. The bills were held as high over their heads as both their extended arms would permit, so that all could see.

The money represented "greed," the Shah's corruption, the West, America, materialism and opulence, none of which the fundamental Muslim wanted to tolerate at the risk of sinning against Allah. Even the very 'image' of the Shah, a man who, though he called himself King, was despicable to the Muslim. The tearing out of his picture was immensely satisfying to these people. The faceless money was cheered with great enthusiasm and glee.

Before I had decided to try to escape from the flower shop, I saw another telling symbol of success of the revolution. One man walked by with a fresh-off-the-press copy of the daily newspaper, the Tehran Journal. The copy he held up was in Farsi. Although we had always read the English version, I could understand the lead headline. It made a profound announcement, printed mere minutes after the Shah had flown his own airplane out of Tehran, leaving his country for what would be his last time. The large bold words across the entire page read, "THE SHAH IS GONE."

The new and odd thing was that the words used were, “SHAH RAFT.” The verb tense was that of an ordinary man, whereas in the past the verb used would have been “SHAH RAFTAEND,” which was the honorable term reserved only for the king or those in honorable positions. He had been stripped of his royalty; he was now a mere mortal.

Strangely, even with my limited Farsi, I interpreted the meaning of that significant Banner. I have wished many times that I could have retrieved a copy of that historic paper, but my mind was not on posterity at the time; rather, it was focused more on survival, getting home, getting out of Iran.

As I felt compelled to leave the shop, and quickly, with a low profile to make the 4-block walk down a shadowy kучeh to my apartment, I moved a little closer to the door and a little more into the open. Mr. Tehrani advised me to stay hidden. Just as I moved more into the light the little flower-buying lady returned. She laid some money on the counter, and my friend put a large bunch of white flowers in her hand. As she waited for her carnations she glanced my way and saw me.

“Uh oh,” I thought; “I have been found.”

I could imagine some things that might be next for me, when she slowly walked toward me, quietly staring at me. She looked up and with a scowling forehead, gave me a piercing look deep into my eyes, in a way that men and women never look at each other in public in a Muslim land.

I expected a loud scream, “Americaye! Americaye!” but it did not come. Instead, she singled out one long-stem flower and handed it to me; she was making me commit, reminding me of the old stories of the conversions to Islam. At the point of a sword a “prospect” could be asked if they would submit to Allah or not. Those submitting lived.

Well, since this was not a commitment to Islam or a denial of Christ, I did call on my inner hope for the future of Iran and accepted her flower. I slowly, tentatively moved it back and forth, about at the rate of the movement of the windshield wipers; at least, I hoped it was at that rate. She smiled broadly and ran out the door. Mr. Tehrani looked pleased.

He was even more pleased when I told him I was leaving his shop. I would never know how important my refuge in his shop was to my life, but I suspected it meant a lot. He and I briefly shook hands, without any traditional hugging or kissing, and I started out the door. As I stepped out, Mr. Tehrani’s daughter, Effie, arrived with a tremendous smile on her face.

Her eyes were big and bright, like the stars ‘deep in the heart of Texas,’ a site looming large in my imagination on that day.

She excitedly said, “Aren’t you happy? The Shah is gone!”

I wasn’t happy; I was worried for her and for the other millions of Iranis I feared were dancing out of the frying pan and into the fire.

I looked straight into her eyes, past the thrill they exuded. “You don’t know what has happened today. You will regret this day.”

She could not understand, she showed dismay with my words. Her brow furled, and her smile disappeared. Her eyes faded from cheer to wonder. We parted at the door. I raced down the shadow-darkened kuche; and she went into her father’s shop.

“Regret,” I had said. “You will regret this day.” I turned that over many times on my rapid walk home. As I locked my door behind me I tried to organize my very cluttered mind. What had happened this day? Where does that leave my work?

By then the little church assemblies had virtually dissipated, with members staying home or returning to families in remote areas or towns out of the capitol. BHI was closed for the time being. Our movement was restricted. Our orders were to ‘stay in your home.’

I prayed and thought. I wondered what word was reaching Sylvia. What was she thinking? Was she worried? What will tomorrow bring? I tried to be real. This day, January 16, marked only the third day in January that I could get to work. Would there be more?

I felt concern, a little fear, anger; then, I grabbed “my own boots and pulled up hard.” I would be ready for whatever was next! I affirmed that to myself. I will handle whatever happens next. Perhaps, “Bring it on,” would have been appropriate for the attitude I mustered, or possibly, “Let’s roll!”

I wanted to do something. I wanted to get a job done. I wanted to have an impact on something. But my hard job was to sit and wait, to be patient, not to be foolish. I planned to meet the BHI bus in the morning at my regular corner. Would it be there?

Chapter Twenty-Four

Ayatollah Khomeini's Triumphal Entry

The thoughts, faith in Islam, and courageous preaching of the Ayatollah Khomeini to his Iranian followers and Muslims around the world, changed the directional flow of history. His overpowering and driving belief that Muslim people should be governed by the instructions of the Koran, not by a secular government and a king, burned in him. He could not sit in exile in France and do nothing.

His attendants and the thousands of Iranian mullahs and other leaders connected to place his messages before the Iranian populace in the mosques of Iran every Friday for the last years of the decade of the 1970s. He struck chord after vibrant chord, delivering his revolutionary sermons to every area of Iran, high and low, light and dark, hot and cold. All heard him preach with fire and vigor, passion and anger, and end always with, "Praise Be to Allah. Death to Shah. Death to America." These words burned into the minds and hearts and life-blood of Iranian Muslims, the followers in Iraq, his admirers and believers in Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Young Muslim fanatics heard him coin the name for America and label her forever — "The Great Satan."

When Osama bin Laden heard those things as a very young man, far away in a land of deserts and rich with the income of a successful contractor and builder, it gave him his purpose in life. When the Ayatollah moved the thinking of the Iranian people into tsunami strength and earthquake proportions of will, he rocked the nation and other nations — indeed the Islamic world — with his proclamations of immorality and anti-West rhetoric, of hate and anger against what he conveyed to open and receptive Muslim minds, as his views on the sin and infidelity of America and of Israel. Khomeini planted the very vital seeds in Osama that would lead him to declare a "War on Americans and the Righteousness of Allah." He prepared himself for life for that war.

He could do that within the law of Islam, and then apply the rules of jihad in the fight. The full-grown fruit of those seeds of the 70s would continue to be harvested for decades to come.

It would be the Ayatollah Khomeini who would put out the contract on Salman Rushdie, the Indian writer, who would write in 1999 that the Aya-

tollah deemed his writing as ‘false lies’ and disparaging words about Islam. The Ayatollah alleged that he, Rushdie, ‘should die for the things he wrote.’ That ‘fatwa’ would send Rushdie into hiding for years to come.

That kind of power from the teachings of Islam by a leader who was respected by Muslims worldwide was concentrated in that one Ayatollah, who focused on what he called the “seat of Satan,” America. The target he painted on the US would forever be there in the minds of all Muslims. Many would thereafter act to damage America and kill Americans, because of the words of that man who could hate more intensely than any human being who can be named.

He did use his huge potent “speech and preach” campaign to win victory after victory from his one-ruler power base in France. He overthrew the Shah of Iran; he drove American and virtually all western people and interests out of his country; he thwarted Russian hopes to ‘takeover’ Iran in the vacuum created by the departure of the Shah and his ‘friends’ of the West; he annihilated the army and regime, indeed the dynasty, of the Shah; he crushed all opposition to his ideals of an Islamic State; he inspired the Iranian people to be brave and bold enough to stand up against the super powers and look them in the eye without blinking. Of Islam’s heroes, the Ayatollah Khomeini would stand the tallest.

He caused leaders to rise and fall, to cover the supreme leadership of Iran as the Shah left forever. Bani Sadr and Bakhtiar were names of prominence, but in their minds as in all minds of Iran, the leader of government, of religion, of life itself, was the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

During the remaining two weeks of January after the Shah tipped the wings of his airplane over Tehran in his farewell gesture, and while the powerful leaders of Iran jockeyed for power and position to curry the maximum favor of the Ayatollah while showing ultimate loyalty to him as their supreme leader, our BHI orders remained the same, ‘ride the bus to work if it comes; stay at home if it doesn’t.’

It was a long two weeks. I went to work twice in that period of time. It was deemed a time of maximum danger for foreigners on the street. As the country waited the arrival of the Ayatollah in his historical return to Iran, BHI prepared to take all its employees out of Iran. My suitcase was packed, and I was ready to abandon my houseful of furniture to my landlord.

My Alabama friend down the street had an enterprising idea, and came to make an offer for my furniture. He said he had made up his mind

to stay in Tehran and just keep low. He was going to buy all the furniture from the departing Americans who were willing to sell, and later sell it to Iranians or others who would pay for it. He saw a chance to make a sizable profit.

I was not keen on the idea, but he offered me \$1,500, and it occurred to me that he was profiteering on people in danger. Partially out of disdain for his questionable scheme I took the money, after telling him one time I thought it was a bad idea. He gave me cash, which I carried until the time of my departure.

While waiting for the word from BHI, I continued to write my view of this historic revolution from “inside the eye of the storm.” As I had opportunity, I mailed the pages I wrote through BHI to Sylvia. In return, I received letters from her and devoured them, wondering when...if...we would ever see each other again.

In my writing I divided my story into two parts. One part was of the actual facts, as I knew them. The other part was an imaginary scenario of 500 American hostages held captive in an area called Gulf District, where the “officially approved” Americans could go for movies, dining on American food supplied by the U.S. Embassy; swim; play tennis; lounge; and play board games. It was a place to hang with others of our familiar American culture away from the stressful climate in which our lives were spun...and twisted. Our friend at the embassy arranged for us to visit Gulf District on occasions.

In the imaginary story of “part two” of my writing, the CIA devised a plan whereby American helicopters would execute an extrication of all 500 people from the compound. The plan was to be carried out with lightning-like speed, and it did succeed in removing the hostages, 12 at a time in each helicopter. They were taken to the desert south of Tehran, where C-130 USAF transport aircraft would load them and fly them out of the country.

This plan in fiction was shown later to be somewhat prophetic, when in April 1980, Jimmy Carter approved an attempt in the real world to rescue the hostages in the embassy compound which was every bit as imaginative as was this figment of my pure fiction. His effort failed, and eight Americans died. With the advantage of fantasy “my mission” written on paper succeeded!

The clock ticked down and the top of the hourglass contained only a few grains of sand. I remained cold in my kitchen writing my fictional/

non-fiction book. My telephone worked rarely, but one of my neighbors had electric power more often than I, and he watched TV for the latest news any time he could.

On a visit I made to eat with him and his Thai wife, we saw the announcement on television that the Ayatollah Khomeini would return to Iran on February 1. This was less than three weeks after the Shah was dethroned. The return was called that of the nations' "conquering hero;" and the "return of the Ayatollah in triumph." Neither the young couple nor I knew what changes would occur, but we did not see that as a favorable development. They decided they had had enough and planned to leave. I was not yet persuaded to go; I would wait for BHI's decision.

I visited with my landlord, and he agreed that things would be different with the Ayatollah in country. I had grown to respect this man who devoutly practiced his religion. He had brought his Koran up to our apartment on one occasion to teach me about Islam.

He drew on the common scriptures of the Koran and the Bible. There were similar stories of the creation, the flood, and of Abraham. He told how Abraham was prepared to slay his son, Ishmael, at God's command. He grinned and said, "But your Old Testament erroneously claims it was Isaac." His effort to teach me of his faith in a peaceful manner earned my respect for him, and I wished that all religious differences could be discussed in the manner that he presented his doctrinal beliefs.

On the first day of my rental agreement with him we had looked through the kitchen cupboards to see what the previous (American) tenants had left. He discovered a bottle half full of vodka, and asked if it were mine. I assured him that it was not, and he asked if I wanted it. I told him I did not. I felt he might want it, but he said, "No, I am a Muslim."

I took the bottle and asked him to follow me to the bathroom, where I emptied it into the commode and started to flush it. Quickly he took the handle before I could and flushed it himself.

We laughed and shook hands, securing a level of respect for each other from the outset of our acquaintance and relationship. We were friends and would remain so until the day I would leave.

That day came. Before my young neighbor friends could make all the arrangements to leave Iran, the Ayatollah arrived in Tehran under the scrutiny of most of the country, via TV cameras. He was telecast walking from the airplane at the airport. The reception party privy to all his movements accepted him with highest honors and respect.

We sat before the TV in wonder and partial disbelief that events had come down to this day. I sadly departed the home of this somewhat anxious couple, and walked to tell the Alabama couple what we had seen. The lady was openly afraid, but the man remained resolute in his conviction to stay and weather the storm, wherever it led.

I was open to the directives of BHI. I left the house of the Alabama couple and went to my very lonely apartment. Soon the phone rang, surprising me, as it had been dead so much of the time the last few weeks.

It was Harry Smith's supervisor. He said, "The Ayatollah has returned. It is all over. Prepare to leave the country tomorrow. We meet at the Royal Tehran Hilton Hotel at 7:00 am. Do not be late. Buses will take you to Mehrabad, where USAF C-130s will take you to Athens. When you cross the Iranian border and are out of Iranian airspace your employment with BHI will be terminated, and your pay will cease. The money you are owed will be paid from headquarters in Bedford (Texas). Register with them as soon as you can. Thank you for your service. Good luck." With that, this chapter of our Iran story began to rapidly close.

I was ready to go, needing only to put my things in a suitcase. I looked around the apartment; then I walked out onto the very narrow back balcony and made my last survey of the neighborhood.

I looked down to the backyard where I had witnessed, and even filmed, the sacrifice of a lamb by my landlord for a holiday. I saw the roof top where we heard the cry, "Allah-u-Akbar," nightly during some of the revolution activities. I went into the rooms where my daughters had slept, thinking I would see my family soon.

The Ayatollah had won. He whipped America, and "he made his triumphal entry on this day." The thought was almost unbelievable. Who could have known the power of the seeds planted by this man, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini? What would he do next in and for and to the world of Islam, the world in general?

Chapter Twenty-Five

“Get out, Now!”

The phone rang for the second time that day. It was my friend at the U.S. Embassy. He had all the facts our government could give him, and he wanted to inform me that the danger level for Americans had gone up significantly. His message was plain, “Get out, now!”

I told him the BHI plan and he breathed a bit of a sigh, saying he was proud that we were ordered out. We said our good byes and hoped we would meet again “back home.”

I did not sleep much that night, but I did make the 7:00 am appointment at the Royal Tehran Hilton hotel for departure. We were driven to the airport without incident, but there was a delay at the airport. We were loaded onto buses to ride out to the C-130s to board for our flight to Athens, but were stopped short of our destination, the plane I was to ride.

We sat on our buses for a longer time than was comfortable; then, we were taken back to the terminal. Something had been put on the runway to prevent our taking off. In time, we learned that trucks that had been driven out by Iranis onto the airstrip to block our takeoff. It was an act of defiance and harassment, and they were soon moved aside. We were again driven out to board the planes. This time we were quickly ushered aboard, and soon the powerful engines began to whine and whir.

The large C-130s roared increasingly fast along the runway and into the sky. Our last look down onto the city brought forward a spectrum of memories and emotions. We were pleased to be leaving, yet sad to go. This mix of feeling is typical of the paradox associated with anything related to Islam, the mystic Middle East, and the exotic land of Persia.

I was happy my family was out and safe in Dallas, and I was pleased to be leaving with my life; but down there were friends, fellow Christians, Americans working to salvage all that could be saved with a long time ally. I felt as though my place were still down there, on the ground with them. Yet, I knew that was irrational. I turned to the question for the future, “Will I ever see any of them again?” Then the focus on the reality that I was on an airplane, leaving danger heading for safety, fairly well took command of my thinking, and I focused on those facts.

Conversational buzz permeated the plane as everyone had his or her own individual thoughts, pain and joy...and stories. At one point in the

early part of the flight, however, we were all in unison. When we left Iranian airspace the captain came on the intercom and announced, “We have left Iranian airspace and are now flying over Turkey en route to Athens, Greece.” A loud and exuberant unified cheer went up all over the aircraft.

These truths sank in as we laid back for the flight: we were safe; we were out of work, our life has changed, we will be united again with family. As soon as I had a tranquil moment to think quietly, I began planning for some kind of future. A return to Iran was nowhere in my imagination, but a return to Frito-Lay was.

In the remaining time of our flight to Greece, I tried to get my situation in perspective. I had written over fifty pages in handwriting (which converts to about 25 or 30 in book size print) about what I had seen and experienced, primarily since my family was taken out of Iran January 2, a month earlier. I definitely would try to incorporate that writing into a book I hoped to write and publish one day. I knew that writing couldn’t support me, so again my mind turned to a real plan to try to get back on at Frito-Lay in their research department.

I wondered if they had any kind of opening for which I could apply. At that point I felt that getting back into the quiet life of a research scientist doing new product development was the best thing for my family and me, but I wanted to remain open, thinking there might be a mission with the church I could carry out.

Trying to see the future seemed futile on that airplane, but my memories of what I was leaving in Iran were real and remained dominantly vivid. Behind me was the land of Persia, mighty kingdom in the days of Cyrus and Darius, Esther and Daniel, a land invaded by Alexander the Great. I was leaving behind the fruit of my work, some newly converted souls. My miniscule part in the great plan of God to “gather souls” for spiritual purposes and life eternal, was closing as far as teaching the Gospel of Christ among the Iranian people. This was the day of the end of that part of the application of the Great Commission to me in that land.

My heart was heavy. My efforts seemed so minor and my mistakes there so large. Did I do what God would have had me do? Were there receptive souls I was leaving, souls I should have been able to reach? Would some truly enjoy heaven throughout eternity due to the work God did through my weak efforts? I prayed that was true, that all the resources of time and work and money were not lost on the foolishness of one inferior man falling short.

Back then to the thoughts of those still in Tehran. I wondered about the plans of the U.S. Embassy and if my friend was preparing to leave or settling in to stay in Iran. Who would be leaving from the diplomatic corps and Embassy staff? Would we even be able to retain a mission, with the Ayatollah taking control?

My mind whirred with the questions about my other friends; the Alabama family; my landlord; my good friends and long time students of the Bible, the Tehrani family; the store keepers and merchants with whom we had traded; Shafiqah and her family; and primarily the sweet, sweet members of the Lord's church with their extremely limited exposure to our fellowship. What would become of all of those dear people?

All of them symbolized the big question for Iran: what happens to the people under an Ayatollah Khomeini government?

The landing in Athens, Greece, ended my relationship with the U.S. Air Force. My flight out of Athens was scheduled on a commercial airline two days later, and it would take me through Chicago to Dallas.

Athens was a bit of a blur of activity, seeing sites that had been very exciting with Sylvia and the kids a few years earlier; but in my present situation and the wait to get back to them in Texas, the sites were relegated to an almost insignificantly low priority. My mind was on the day I could have those people back in my arms!

DFW Airport never looked so good as when I did get there, home from Tehran on that day in early February 1979. Seeing my wife and family made things come back into true focus, and the perils of life in that chaotic land were behind all of us.

Sylvia had been living in a small apartment in Irving, Texas, and had enrolled the younger girls in school there. She had taken a job as an Accounts Representative at a major medical and scientific book provider. She negotiated herself into a high enough salary to cover the expenses of the family. She told her employer that she did not know if I would come back home or not; and to her credit, she made all necessary arrangements to carry on in the event that I actually did not return.

The family had been attending our former large congregation, South MacArthur Church of Christ on the south side of Irving, while the apartment was on the far north side, within walking distance of both of the schools the girls attended. She had made the apartment very comfortable and nice, but it was small for a family of five, and I slept on the floor.

We soon moved to a larger place where we remained for five years, as we rebuilt our lives.

Frito-Lay advised me they would work on putting me in a position as soon as they could, but nothing was available at that time. I went to work as a manager-in-training in a chain of convenience stores. Although it was out of my line of work it put bread on the table for four months.

Finally, I got a call from Frito-Lay. They had more or less structured a job in the area of corn products research. The position was a chance to build up several opportunities for projects leading to new products. It provided true challenges and soon became my consuming and fulfilling work.

I heard very little from Tehran. I had made an agreement with my best Iranian friends, the Tehrani family, that I would not write to them until I heard from them. I feared a letter from America to them would jeopardize their safety. I had left them the address of the South MacArthur Church to afford them the option of writing to me if they so decided. Nothing ever came through that address.

I had given the same information to Bill Zaya, who had taken his mother and our great friend and coworker in the church in Tehran, Mary Zaya, to Chicago during the escalating revolution in the fall of 1978. She had had a stroke in all the stress of the time and could barely walk, even with a walker.

After we had been in Texas a few months Bill called me from Chicago to tell me his mother was gravely ill and would not last long. During that phone call he informed me that the church in Tehran, which had met in his and Mary's home at the beginning of our work in 1974, had grown to about 120 in attendance, with a number of baptisms after we left. But, unfortunately his sources in Iran told him that the small group had scattered due to the dangers of the revolution.

Of course, it tore at me, not being able to do anything to help them, knowing I would likely not ever see them again...not in this time anyway. I was helpless, feeling that they were not ever going to be able to enjoy a "good life," as Islam would again hold sway in Iran. That being the case, the advances made by the Shah would be reversed and the heavy yoke of Islam would weigh the people down to an uninvited way of life. Christians would be relegated to a lower-than-second class citizen status, as this staunch and fundamental Ayatollah took command. Lives of Christians would become very cheap, and they would be strictly and harshly

treated at best.

That was the last report I had of the church in Tehran, although contact with other Americans with whom I worshipped and worked there occurred occasionally. None of them knew the whereabouts of the Iranian Christians we taught or those with whom we worshipped.

The Alabama family called the office of the “South Mac” congregation and left word they had gotten out safely and were home. He apparently lost all the money he had risked on buying American goods and furniture there as they departed.

Chapter Twenty-Six

Komeini's Iron Hand

We began watching Nightline on television the first night I got home. It gave fairly accurate updates on the situation in Iran and the events of the revolution and beyond as far as we could tell. It covered the effects the rise of Khomeini had on the Muslim communities around the world. He invigorated and energized the entire world of Islam in his single-handed, tremendous victory over the Shah and America.

That successful revolution which was against America as well as the Shah, sent the significant message to extremists and Muslim fanatics, "America Is Vulnerable!"

That message echoed and echoed, and still echoes today.

The Nightline programs every night covered the American hostage-taking later in 1979. It was incisive in its treatment of those events and the reasons the hostages were taken. Although the 53 Americans were held as leverage to get arms from the United States and as ransom to get back to Iran billions of dollars of assets America froze and held when the Shah fell, the true reason the Ayatollah held the 53 men and women was to, "Spit in the eye of the American eagle."

This insult to America gave the Ayatollah vengeful delight. He was controlling the 'infidels of America,' and he would tighten the screws until he squeezed weapons from them and the money that "belonged to the Iranian people," as he proclaimed.

Negotiating with the Ayatollah was as productive as pleading with or threatening a beet. He dictated; he was not dictated to! He wrote the rules in international relations, and he laid down the law of Iran.

The Ayatollah's "committees" took over the task of executing and enforcing Koranic (Shariah) laws and administering punishment to the law-breakers. These punishments were very severe and also done by the laws of Islam, strict and often "final." The era of the logical government of the Shah was over. The new order was sure, quick and strict enforcement of Islamic law...no delay, no defense, no recourse, no mercy, sometimes (usually) no trial.

The days of western custom and dress and 'free enterprise' in Iran were a thing of the past. All influence of the West was to be rooted out and eliminated. The younger, more idealistic and westernized people were

forced to go back to the long-held customs of their parents and grandparents or face ridicule, harassment, “demotion,” imprisonment or execution — violent and swift.

Iranis would be forced to abide by the traditions and words of the Koran. Women would return to the age-old customs of modesty, covering in public all but face and hands. Nothing else could be shown, including any curl or lock of hair, or punishment would follow. Often locks of hair were literally “cut off” by members of the “committees.”

The women would walk well behind their husbands (10 steps, as a rule). They would submit to the will of the men. They would be diminished in public, and their profile would be lowered. Their eyes were to be kept “off other men,” and their view would be submissive. Their countenance would not be jovial or even cordial in the presence of men other than family.

Those radical changes in the lifestyles of the young were hard to bring about, and the “committees” enforced the rules by careful observation and inspection of the women. They were to be covered by a “chador” (full body-length covering, usually black or dark in color). Modesty meant covering with eyes cast down, and basically living in public silence, and without opinion.

Any “lewd” or immodest behavior or dress would surely be punishable up to imprisonment. No one was permitted to speak against the Ayatollah or in support of the past regime. If they did, they were at risk of being put to death. The freedom of speech was limited to favoring the rule of Islam.

The Ayatollah made his rule very clear — obey it or be severely punished! Association with the past government was punishable by death, and many sentences of execution were carried out with vigor and with relish by the anti-Shah / pro-Khomeini committees. The “cleansing” was thorough. A new Iran was the objective, and indeed it would be achieved. A new fundamental Islamic state would result.

The re-indoctrination of the clerics was soon underway when the Ayatollah was empowered. Immediately as he assumed authority the lines were drawn — conform or die. His mind was on two things, making Iran a true Islamic Republic and re-energizing the global jihad. The power of that man’s words reverberated across the entire Muslim world and were heard in all corners of the earth by highly emotional Muslims prone to radicalism and ruthless terror against “infidels,” which is to be interpreted as “anyone

who did not accept Islam.” (at least verbally, since neither they nor anyone else could really know what was in the heart of the one “threatened.”)

Muslim pride peaked everywhere in the world. Anywhere there was a Muslim he was made alive again by the authoritative and victorious decrees of Ayatollah Khomeini. His word literally was law.

Had Khomeini’s life not been cut off in June 1989, he would have had the “great pleasure” of leading or at least inspiring suicide-homicide fanatics into attacks on western interests around the world. These enterprises and missions in countries everywhere were targets of the “true believers and faithful of Islam.”

The ones who were not faithful to the tenets inspired by Mohammed to be entered into the book called the ‘Holy Koran’ were simply considered infidels and therefore enemies of Allah. Anyone making a confession that he (or she) believed in Allah and that Mohammed was his messenger, no matter the stress and pressure of the threat of death, would be considered a Muslim and allowed to live. Anyone denying or implying a denial of Allah would simply be put to death.

With his complete and passionate belief that everything contrary to the words of Allah must be utterly “wiped out,” he laid the groundwork for physical attacks on any “immoral people.” The number one objective was America, because of its power and decadence, and its support of Israel, archenemy of all Muslims.

The rhetoric streamed from the mouth of the striking figure with the stern presence, “America and Israel must be brought to a mortal end.” He spoke on TV with oratory skill equivalent to Adolph Hitler, Winston Churchill or Ronald Reagan, for impact on his audience. Every time he made a speech he put one more layer of hatred, passion, and commitment on true Muslim devotees, young and old. He knew what he was doing; these results were not just consequences of chance. The Ayatollah was seeing far into the future, and he knew quite surely that his words would inspire visions and ignite fires in Muslim minds and hearts everywhere for their lifetimes.

As the messages of Billy Graham got to the heart of his listeners throughout their lifetimes, the words of Ayatollah Khomeini would drive and guide the lives of his listeners for the rest of their lives. The words of the Ayatollah in the 1980s would continue to play out into the 3rd millennia.

This man called the Islamic world to war!

Chapter Twenty-Seven

Hate and Resentment Grow

The Ayatollah Khomeini found few things humorous. He led a serious life, believing all things pertaining to Allah and Islam were not trivial or funny. He determined early in life to do all things for his god, and he carried out that decision fully.

He destroyed our hope of planting the church in Tehran and beyond, cutting our time in Iran way short of attaining an ‘organized’ body of believers. God does have His hand in the work of seed planting that was done in Iran, and perhaps He has people still sowing all over the country. The dispersion of church members that resulted from the revolution of the 1970s could well have been the Lord’s way of spreading the seed quickly. One can only pray that to be true.

The success of Khomeini in Iran gave him the virtual voice of Islam, and he said things in ways that have become the pattern of Muslim leaders speaking in public. He spoke to the West with belligerence, while the words were craftily designed to empower, inspire, and ignite fires in the hearts of most believing Muslims. The Ayatollah did not care where those fires burned, and it mattered not how many were lit nor what they burned. He fired up an almost passive people regarding the West.

He made them believe again in global jihad and almost single-handedly blocked the advance of open Christianity in the lands of the Muslims. He instilled in the deeply conservative Muslims confidence in themselves, the faith in the Koran, and the trust in Allah to desire to live for and die for the cause of Islam.

His forceful oratory and mystic persona made fanatics from all walks of the many cultures under the sway of Islam to want to do something spectacular. He, more than any one in centuries had done, mobilized the Islamic Nations to “engage evil, the infidel, the West, Israel and America”. They believed that with Allah on their side they could not fail. They believed it when the Ayatollah spoke it, they believe it now, and some may believe it forever. The Muslims are at war with “evil,” they are at war with the non-Muslims; they are especially at war with the United States of America. As long as one devout violent jihadist Muslim breathes, Islam will war against America. So it was inspired by design by Khomeini, so it is and so it may ever be.

There is true, burning hate for America and Christianity (pictured mostly by the Muslims as Catholicism led by the Pope). This is true because of a long list of reasons, some of which could seem logical to a Middle Eastern mind with religious fervor.

Whatever the reasons, whatever the facts of the situation, the Muslims of the world teach their children to “hate America.” Having lived among Muslims five years, I learned many of the things they hate about us, including the following list, as they see us:

1. Americans are Christians, and they connect the modern ‘Christians’ of all faiths with the Crusades, where Muslims fought a basically all-catholic army. They hate Christianity, which they see as a false, incomplete religion made up of “infidels,” which they consider all non-Muslims to be.
2. They believe God is one Entity, and think Americans believe in a triune Godhead — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They cannot conceive of God manifesting Himself in three forms.
3. Americans accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God, or worse yet, as an “equal” to God. They believe God is one and none is His equal. The Muslims cannot see God and Christ as “One.”
4. Americans have not accepted Mohammed as the Prophet of God, nor do they accept their claim that God revealed His word to Mohammed to be recorded in the Koran.
5. Americans do not accept the Koran as God’s word, believing it was only the thoughts of Mohammed to justify his own lifestyle and views.
6. America’s alliance with and protection of the Jews.
7. America’s lack of regard for the poor, as the Muslims suppose.
8. American economic successes, believing our business methods are corrupt.
9. For building the military force America has and exercising influence around the world with that might.
10. Americans plunder in other countries.
11. For the killing of Muslims, starting with the Crusades, and all the killing of Muslims by America and the West since that time.
12. For the white skin of Americans, which many envy, prizing American women they can attract (and dominate) to ‘lighten’ the complexion in their offspring.

13. For what they perceive as greed in America's ambitious striving for advancement, promotion, raises, and ultimately more income and more power.
14. For demanding interest on loans, which they believe takes advantage of the needy borrower.
15. For viewing Muslims as 2nd class, 3rd world, uncivilized inferiors in society, government, and religion. This is a perception on their part, though not true.
16. The "assertiveness" of American women, because THEY see women as not equal to men.
17. What they perceive as a sparse prayer life by Americans.
18. The immorality of American celebrities and big sports stars.
19. American "uncleanness" regarding swine, dogs, and even wearing shoes in their homes, tracking in dirt.
20. American drunkenness and lasciviousness and debauchery.
21. Americans wearing scanty or gaudy clothes.
22. America's religious "opulence."

Although much of their reasoning to the western mind is illogical and rooted in mysticism, it converts to real emotion and action in the Muslim fanatics. Because of their deep hate and resentment, they readily die in killing others to defeat the "Great Satan," sinful and blasphemous America.

In a religion based on physical conquest of the world as a part of their faith and "spiritual purpose," the end literally justifies any means. Their objective is world dominance for Allah, the name they ascribe to the one God.

They see the U.S. as the center of the most wicked power and leader of infidels; therefore, the most ambitious and powerful Muslim terrorists attack everything possible that represents the greatest "evil." Believing Allah is with them in their ultimate campaign they are emboldened to fight the mighty western forces of "unbelievers."

With all the hatred they have accumulated through the years and decades, even centuries, the normal Muslim is blind to the things Americans resent about the religion of Islam and the Muslim people.

Almost every American now understands that many, actually probably most, Muslims do resent, even hate, Americans and the West. Since 9/11 that has been unquestionably clear. That attack mainly resulted from deep hate, resentment and envy of us by the fanatical Muslims. Thus, Americans have developed a strong resentment toward Muslims.

The resentment by these U.S. citizens is primarily rooted in the reality of suicide-homicide bombings, while a part is based on the vision held by many Americans of the ‘stereotypical Arab’ as foisted on us by Hollywood writers and comics.

The attitudes as well as the actions of Muslims have created expressions in Americans who live and work among them, often in their countries. They call them ‘camel jockeys’ or ‘rag heads’ and worse things than that, causing more friction and irritation between them and the Muslims.

Americans have grown to distrust many Muslims with whom they have worked because they have been robbed by them, lied to by them, cheated by them in transactions, taken advantage of by them, overcharged by them in business, and “bargained” with unfairly by them, then, ultimately maimed and killed by them.

The background having been here laid out, some of the reasons for American resentment toward Muslims are as follows:

Without need of a number: NINE ELEVEN! (September 11, 2001)

1. Their hate and resentment of America and Americans.
2. Their audacious speech and actions when they speak of America.
3. Their belief that they have to ‘force’ non-Muslims to be Muslim.
4. Their rejection of Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
5. Their lack of respect for human life.
6. Attacking life and property of others with little or no provocation and with fanatical abandon.
7. Their cruel treatment of women, as if they are inferior possessions, even insignificant, as though they were merely some “thing” that can be eliminated, destroyed by the will of man.
8. Forbidding and preventing freedom of religion of anyone in or under their power or control.
9. Cutting off hands of robbers, revealing a cruelty the western mind detests and possibly cannot even understand.
10. Calling Americans “infidels.”
11. Telling Americans who to befriend, how to live, whom to help.
12. Judging American ethics and morals.
13. Their “holier than thou” attitude.
14. Their accusations that America introduced “immorality” to their people.

15. Their hypocrisy, saying derogatory things about western morality, and on the other hand building fortunes, committing polygamy, getting drunk, gambling excessively, and committing sexual sin.
16. Their lack of self-control, acting “explosively and impulsively” against the West.
17. Their criticism of all things of the “West.”
18. Their coming to America at all instead of staying in their own countries.
19. Their demanding much more in a bargain than they are willing to give.
20. Their accent, not speaking English correctly.
21. Their building places of worship in America from which they spew out the venom of “hate America” speech.
22. Their arrogance when communicating with or about the Americans.
23. Their intolerable ego in the eyes of the Westerner.
24. Their illogical mysticism and way of expressing opposing opinion.
25. Their desire and plan to apply Shariah law in America.
26. Their dress of tunics, turbans, sandals, and veils/coverings.
27. Their loud calls to prayer over public address systems, disturbing the peace and conscience of others.
28. Building their mosques in the land of the free and claiming Cordoba for sites to build when some event of horror to Americans has occurred (site of the WTC towers being bombed on 9/11, as a case in point).

There are Muslims who do not fit the above descriptions. At the same time, there are no doubt other people who lived in Pakistan and Iran that are not aware of some of the things written here, and there are those who would not even agree with some of this list. But these are some of the deep-seated reasons why Americans resent the Muslims.

As long as these deep feelings are held between the Muslims and Americans, mission work among these peoples of the faith of Islam will be difficult, yea next to impossible for Americans to do.

Unless and until the Muslims and the West are able to sit down at a table and work through all those things that cause so much intense hate and resentment, the terrorism and clashes caused by the Muslim insistence

on the global jihad will not end. It is not in the makeup of the current day Muslim to give up on global control for their religious cause.

They do not realize that they are making judgments that only God can make. They judge the heart of a man when they command him to confess Allah or die. How can they purport to know the future of the man and to know he will never have a change of heart or will? Forcing a man to convert to Islam is no conversion at all. Any 'conversion' must be from the heart and will, faith and desire of the individual, not at the point of a blade or barrel of a gun. It is not logical for a Muslim to think he gets a follower of Allah by force.

Followers of the Ayatollah, and of Osama Bin Laden before he was finally cornered and killed, believe deeply that an eternal paradise awaits them if they die in jihad, and they know their family left behind will have great honor for their actions. These are strong incentives, and no one will deter them except possibly men of respect and honor, courage and compassion, who can get inside them and persuade them of a better way than violent jihad. That does not seem likely.

The best and deepest-thinking scholars of Islam could make it happen by agreeing on a path for the jihadists, who hold a world vision of conquest, to follow a path of peace and co-existence. The current view of the jihadists is that anyone they confront must accept Islam or die. The better option could be for the scholars to find within the pages of the Koran a way that allows an option for a person to convert to Islam or "be turned over to Allah for his eternal judgment."

Until a message of that kind can be found in the Koran by the wisest of the Muslim religious leaders, the jihad against the West will not end. The words of Ayatollah Khomeini assured that unending struggle when he revealed the vulnerabilities of American power and the western commitment to defend liberty against terror.

Bin Laden confirmed the Ayatollah's success when he showed an uncanny ability to elude American capture for so many years, and continued to lead the jihad Khomeini re-ignited in the hearts of fanatical and extreme Islamacists.

The killing of Bin Laden was one of four essentials to settling the jihadists into a potentially peaceful conclusion. The other three remain — complete successes in Iraq and Afghanistan; a genuine and workable peace agreement between Israel and Palestine; and finally the neutralization of the Iranian nuclear threat, and that by whatever means is necessary to positively end the threat.

Many Muslims were elated and relieved when Saddam Hussein was captured because he had terrorized his own citizens, even killing thousands of Muslims. Muslims did not betray bin Laden because he was not killing Muslims except as acts of “holy jihad.” He was held in the highest regard in all circles of Islam, unlike Saddam.

The Iranian president, Ahmadenijad, like Bin Laden, was a close student of the Ayatollah, being young and impressive when he overthrew the Shah and returned to Iran victorious over the Shah, the West, the “Great Satan,” and the infidelic immorality of the Americans in general. Both Bin Laden and Ahmadenijad were strict adherents to the terrorist form of jihad. That fact has made it virtually impossible for Christianity to grow, flourish, or even exist in Iran since the days of the Islamic Revolution, still guiding the minds of the Muslim leaders of Iran. Ahmadienejad may hold the key to the future unfolding history of the world.

The church as we left it way back in 1979 cannot exist under the conditions of this day in that country. There is no vision of hope that I see for my ever returning to Iran to teach the Gospel. The climate is just not conducive to an outsider preaching Christ under this regime. The longer he remains in power the longer two forces develop in the populace:

One, Khomeini’s power-base of fanatical followers of anti-West terroristic jihad will continue to amass strength and adherents; and two, the stronger the anti-government sentiment will grow. The collision is inevitable. Outside interference by America or Israel or any other Islamic nation will not likely happen. Most other non-Islamic nations have no approach to use to change anything going on inside that country; only Ahmadienejad might do that.

In my opinion, Iran will tread on the dangerous ground of the buildup of nuclear firepower, and Israel will commit to ending the dire and deadly threat to their own lives, their homeland, and existence of their political nation. The clash of Israel and Iran can occur at anytime. If Iran does indeed act foolishly and move one inch further than Israel feels they can tolerate, then, Israel will attack their nuclear sites, with or without agreement and cooperation of the U.S.

After that smoke clears, the Christian missionary might find a way back in to carry the Gospel to those who would hear. But, recall, Iran was a part of the 3-nation “axis of evil,” as George Bush called it, and is poised to become a much more significant part.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

World Peace from Tehran

President Ahmadinejad Has the Power to Calm the World

(Open Opportunity; Open Letter to the World)

The Jihad of Islam can lead the world to peace. It has already called attention to the facts of conflict, not just physical conflict, like the bombing of the World Trade Center towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC; rather, it puts the light on the conflict of good and evil, morality and immorality, spirit and flesh, if you will. And therein lies a universal and time immemorial conflict – the battle within oneself to ‘do good’ or ‘do bad’. In essence, that is the ‘higher form’ of Jihad, struggling within oneself to be the kind of being that God wants.

That fight inside the individual is considered by the devout and knowledgeable Muslims to be the ‘greater Jihad;’ while the terrorist attacks are believed to be the ‘lower or lesser Jihad.’ At any rate, that is the way the original man of the Islamic faith saw it. Mohammed, it is claimed, believed the struggle to be of clean spiritual intellect and of good physical being while on earth was the essence of pleasing Allah.

The western mind may not understand the thinking coming out of Tehran ten years into the third millennium as leading to world peace, and indeed that may not be the objective of that nation in 2012. The roots, however, of what emanates from that ancient land of Persia, are outgrowths of what went on there during the world-shaking revolution of the 1970s.

What the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini taught and preached in that day from his exile in France and later from within the Iranian nation as its Supreme Ruler, forms the foundation and the initiation of what we today even see as the worldwide Jihad. The West sees the Muslim or ‘Islamic terrorists on Jihad’ as anti-West and determined to destroy the American and European societies in military fashion and by physical ambitions for a takeover of the material assets of those lands.

That was not what the Ayatollah was saying when he overthrew the Shah in 1979. His vision was indeed victory for Allah all over the world, and he perhaps even envisioned the entire world population as becoming Muslims. But, his primary focus was to rid the world of corruption and immorality. In that way he imagined the world as turning to Allah as the one true God.

His tolerance did not extend to giving the person a choice in faith; rather, his was a clear, black and white reasoning. The decision was a simple one — if one believed, he would be a follower of Allah; if he did not believe he would simply be an infidel. There was no option for one following Jesus Christ, and thus “Jehovah, God.”

In the first decade of the 21st century the leaders of the Islamic nations, including and perhaps even especially Iran, still feel the empowerment of the result on 9/11/2001. This was ultimately “fruit” of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s seed planting.

President Ahmadenijad is a high profile example of the doctrine of the Ayatollah taken to the extreme of the lower Jihad, plainly the physical attack on unbelievers. While Bin Laden was the covert or hidden extreme; Ahmadenijad represents the overt or open extreme.

Ayatollah Khomeini was both doctrinal concepts personified, holding the vociferous open stance of Iran’s president, as well as the concept of hiding with hit and run attacks on the “sins of the West.” In one personality were the extreme actions of the “Greater Jihadist,” which is the individual’s struggle for improvement and cleansing morally, and the other actions of the “Lower Jihadist,” the attacking of those nations and peoples who are not living as an Islamic moral society. It should be noted that these morals are determined by the Ayatollah and HIS judgments.

He did not see the moral cleansing as only for the individuals of Iran, but of the entire society. He saw the national immorality as a development of the Shah and his pro-western policies, and he felt that he could eliminate the immorality of Iran by removing that “great corruptor,” the Shah. He also extended his vision to a worldwide morality cleansing. He considered America, the “Great Satan,” as the leader of the immorality of the world.

The things he opposed are in great part things that are opposed by Christian scriptures — immorality in general, greed, drunkenness, and profanity of the name of God, indifference toward the poor and underprivileged, racism, murder, lying, stealing, and such like. The Ayatollah wanted to eliminate those things from Iran, the West, and indeed the entire world. He initially focused his campaign against his view of wrongdoing, sin, corruption, and immorality on the Shah, who he said was “friend and ally” of the “Great Satan.”

By linking the Shah with America and the West he was able to rally the Iranian masses, indeed the Muslims of the world, to the “great

cause,” world domination for Islam, the cause of Allah. He did not see the killing of infidels as the objective of Islam; he saw it only as one method, albeit a very strong force to be used, to turn the world to Allah.

Killing an infidel not only eliminated one nonbeliever, but it also served to intimidate other — ALL other — non-Muslims. The killing became addictive to the resentful, perhaps even envious Muslims of Iran, Arabia, Iraq, Palestine, Libya, Somalia, et al, among all the nations of Islam.

That resentment toward the West was embraced by the poor and oppressed of the entire world, and an international, indigenous following grew. People began to be moved by the apparent ‘weakness’ of the U.S., misreading the American inaction to help the Shah remain in power. Instead of wanting to make a military assault on Iran, the White House wanted to appease and show them a peaceful intent. That appeasement policy would ultimately lead to the taking of the more than 50 hostages at the American Embassy in Tehran later on, in October of 1979.

The movement of the Ayatollah engulfed the world, and inspired their thinking on how to strike a hard blow to the “sinful West.” This became the dominating and driving ideology of the more radical members of the Islamic faith as it was being effectively and successfully practiced by the invigorated leader bent on deposing the Shah. Ahmadinejad may have inherited the key to world peace or to world war, receiving a kind of power not thought possible.

The central focus of the world is on a line of five contiguous Islamic states of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Syria. Emanating from that relatively small geographic region of the world will blow the thundering winds of terror and war or the refreshingly welcome breezes of peace.

President Ahmadinejad has the focus on himself with the ranting about “driving Israel into the sea” and the holocaust “fraud;” the real and genuine threat of nuclear bombs; the rebellious Irani populace pushing hard against his policies; Tehran’s venomous spewing against the West since the Iran Revolution of the late 1970s; the very central geographic location of war, terror, and ruthless killing coming from the influence of over 30 years of vitriol which fomented the global jihad mentality; and living with the charge, true as it seemed when it was made, of Iran being one of the three making up the “axis of evil,” along with Korea and Iraq.

From the focus on him by the world, he has a forum like none

other. He can stand up and speak for peace. If he does indeed believe he is serving a compassionate and merciful God, he has a point in time in these days of 2011 – 2012 to change the course of world history.

These things if spoken before the U.N. Assembly can effect every country, every person, of the world. Standing between two powerful groups of leaders in the world of Islam, President Ahmadinejad can speak for the entire Islamic world. With the supreme leaders of Islam on his right and the political leaders of Islamic nations on his left, he can call the world to peace with words of a true world figure in this tone of power:

Brothers, it is time to lay down the sword. We have lost too many Muslim lives and shed too much Islamic blood. We have seen too many families split and too many resources sacrificed. It is time for a unified effort of all peoples of the world — Muslim and others — to reevaluate life. All Muslims can live with a non-violent jihad and regain the life Allah would have us lead. I am calling on the true devout Muslims to return to a peaceful life for Allah and the good of the Islamic Brotherhood.

This call would be welcome throughout the world of Islam; and the genuine Muslims could see it and apply the pressure of will to end the violence of jihad and the terror of fanaticism.

Islam through Iran would regain the respect of the world, which has been lost since 1979. Islam would be seen as a force for peace and life, not a source of destruction and death for Muslims in the killing of others.

Surely the Muslims of the world can see the one they call Allah would be pleased if Muslims ended the killing of other Muslims. They would understand if people lived to be able to choose their faith without the threat of death.

President Ahmadinejad could receive the accolades of world leaders of every nation for returning men to an existence of prosperity and honor to help the needy of all peoples.

This “new world” could be the direct result of wisdom manifested in the Iranian capitol of Tehran. Perhaps the wisest Imams of the Islamic faith can see that a world of people working together could improve the creation of the Creator.

“Amnesty for All Peoples of the World”

And the populace of the world could start over and try harder this time to do it right! If President Ahmadinejad would do this, it could hap-

pen. What a great crowning achievement for him, for his people, for Iran, for the world!

When that day does come, perhaps the good Westerners may again be as welcome in Iran as the good Iranis are in America. As the Muslim might say, "Enshallah," and the Christian might say, "If God Wills."

We knew when we were forced from Iran with the fall of the Shah and the rise of the Ayatollah, that we were leaving church members, Christians, literally babes in Christ. It was a hard and heavy time in our minds and on our hearts.

We knew we would not likely ever see most, if any, of them again. They had begun scattering out of Tehran to the countryside and back to their hometowns all over Iran, before we ever left the country.

The church pretty much ceased existing as a unit; although, we can pray and have the hope that the truth was spread back to those hometowns and villages across the nation.

I'd like to believe that Ayatollah Khomeini's "triumphal entry" into Iran might prove a "triumph" for the spreading of the Gospel along many roads out of Tehran. We can only pray that the Lord went with the members who He saw as sincere and devout believers who could pass on His word. Dispersion can be used by our Lord to spread His word, as it was in the First Century. We pray that is occurring in Iran from the seeds planted in the late 1970s.

