



**CIA ALPHA TEAM
(FAR RIGHT - MIKE SPANN)**

EL ROI: THE GOD WHO SEES

When the fall of Kabul, Afghanistan, occurred in August of last year, it shocked the world. For those unable to escape, a brutal reign of terror was unleashed as the Taliban began hunting those who had any connection with the west, including believers and allies of the United States. Despite operating in 36 countries, many of them war zones, Far Reaching Ministries (FRM) did not have extensive operations in Afghanistan at the time.

Setting up operations in war zones is extremely complex, costly and can often take years to establish. Despite this,

the Lord gave us another mission: Afghan Rescue.

At the time, our mission involved rescuing 26 doctors, pastors, and ministry workers with a partner organization. Within months, FRM set up sophisticated operations and due to early successes, quickly gained a reputation for rescuing Afghans. This reputation led to many requests from other organizations, quickly growing our list from 26 to well over 3,000. One such request came from Shannon Spann, a former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officer and the widow of the first American casualty in Afghanistan, Mike Spann.

Shannon has been collaborating with our team in evacuating Afghans and her contribution to our efforts are immensely valuable. She has become a dear friend of the ministry and she wanted to share her story with you.



SHANNON SPANN WITH FALLEN HUSBAND

A letter from Shannon Spann:

Thank you friends of FRM for helping to bring the Kingdom of God near to vulnerable Afghans since the collapse of their country in August of 2021.

Soon after the fall of Kabul I began receiving frantic messages from Afghans that had given faithful and valuable service to the United States alongside my late Husband Mike Spann. In September 2001 I was an officer in the Central Intelligence Agency's Counter Terrorist Center and my husband Mike, formerly a Captain in the United States Marine Corps, was a paramilitary officer in the CIA's Special Activities Division. Soon after al-Qa'ida attacked our country we knew Mike would deploy to Afghanistan with the goal of disrupting any planned future attacks. In early October Mike, along with the other 7 members of CIA's Team Alpha deployed to Afghanistan to link up with the Afghan Calvary Commanders of the Northern Alliance in a campaign that was the foundation for America's early successes in the war.

20 years later when I started receiving desperate pleas for help from families that had fought alongside Mike,

I reached out to former CIA colleagues to see what we could do. We had some early successes getting a few families to America, but after the initial chaos of August 2021 the mission became much more difficult. One

tearful night in September I heard the Lord say to me, "Shannon you have reached out to your old colleagues, but you have not reached out to my people for help." The next morning, I prayed about what this could mean and felt like I should call my old friend Bob Shank for advice. When I connected to Bob he told me about these men - Wes Bentley and Brent Theobald - who were also involved in the mission of caring for Afghans left in a vulnerable situation because of the US withdrawal. When I asked Bob to tell me more about who these men are he said "Shannon, if my

wife and daughters were lost in a dangerous place, these are the men I would want coming for them." With that endorsement I flew to California to meet with Wes and Brent and others from the FRM team and a wonderful partnership was born.

One story that your generous support made possible began during Mike's time in Afghanistan when he worked alongside an Afghan intelligence chief called Amanullah Surkhabi. Amanullah is described brave and selfless and notable for his humane treatment of Taliban prisoners in his care. On November 25, 2001, both Mike and Amanullah were killed in the early moments of an uprising at Qala-i-Jangi prison in Mazar-i-Sharif. Like my husband, Amanullah also left behind a wife and young children.

Since the fall of Kabul, Amanullah's wife Sohaila and his daughter Shabnam have been under constant threat of being forcibly married to a Taliban in a so-called "revenge marriage." When their situation at home became untenable, FRM moved them from house to house so they could avoid detection. Owing to the extreme stress of their situation, Sohaila developed a persistent bleeding

condition and last week her doctor said if she did not get treatment she would surely die. FRM's team on the ground took her safely to the hospital and ensured she was given treatment that saved her life. Sohaila's husband and mine fell together on the battlefield in 2001, so it is a unique honor for me to partner with FRM in her rescue in 2022.

Despite the suffering of Afghans fading from the 24-hour news cycle, our small team has remained committed to providing, food, shelter, medicine and hope while we continue to work toward resettling these precious families - Christian and Muslim alike - in a new home where they will be safe and free. Your support of FRM saves lives like Sohaila and Shabnam's on a daily basis. You prove to these precious people that they are seen and heard and not forgotten. El Roi has always been my favorite of God's names, recorded in Scripture when Hagar discovers in a desert that she is not alone. El Roi, "the God who sees me." Many times in walking through the valley of the shadow of Mike's death with his three children I have trusted that God sees us in our distress. Your continued support of our mission helps many others to trust Him as "the God who sees me" even when the eyes of the world around us have moved on to other things.

Thank you for continuing to fight with us for the lives of our Afghan friends,

Shannon Spann

Our work in assisting with Afghan rescue continues. We have successfully rescued 1,200 Afghans thus far, but success has come with a steep financial cost. It takes a considerable amount of money to keep families alive in Afghanistan, procure legal documents, and transport them safely to new destinations where we assist them in rebuilding their lives. Our resources for continued operations are almost depleted once again. While the world has largely forgotten about the Afghans, we know that Jesus has not. His heart aches over the 9-year-old girls that right now are being forced into marriage with 40-year-old Taliban men. He weeps over the forgotten widows and orphans who are crying for help. He is the God who sees. FRM is committed to completing the mission the Lord tasked us with back in September 2021. Your generosity has allowed us to get this far, and with your help we can finish the mission to rescue the remaining Afghans on our list.



We are committed to completing our mission to rescue and relocate as many remaining fleeing Christians as possible over the next 12-16 months. The costs to rescue, feed, hide in a network of safe houses, and secure legal paperwork (passport, visas) to get them into a safe country are down to \$4,500 per person. Our goal: 700 remaining Christians to rescue. In addition, you can sponsor a rescued Afghan family with food for \$100 monthly. Our goal: 1,000 families.

UNRECORDED GENOCIDE BURMA



We wanted to update you about the war in Burma, but many other things have recently been taking priority. We have much to share, and we want to let you know that we have not forgotten about these suffering people. To date, we have spent \$320,000 feeding and ministering to the people in Burma. The funds we have sent came at just the right time, as the team in Burma told us that the ministry bank accounts were about zero. Every penny we have received for this ministry has been sent to ease the suffering of so many. We want to thank you for your prayers and generosity while the world refuses to record a great genocide.

WHEN I WAS HUNGRY

Last January, while in Russia, I had this unsettling feeling that something bigger, increasing in intensity and frequency, was already in motion. Future events would begin falling, like dominos, one right after another. I told Vicky that something had changed when I was in Russia, and I felt if the Lord told me I would not be returning. But I also believe He is in control. For years, I have been preparing my staff for the increasingly chaotic times that we will see in the last days.



MANY SURRENDERING TO CHRIST

This year started like every other year. I was with my team in Russia for our annual Christmas outreach, but this year it was different. An urgency had been building over the last few years to get as much done in Russia as we could before the doors for us to minister would slam shut again. In January, as we were still in the middle of the Afghanistan crisis—getting Christians out of the country before the Taliban could arrest and kill any more believers—we were in Russia with multiple churches that we support, celebrating Russian Christmas (January 7). We were delivering winter food to hundreds of the elderly poor that we support through our Potatoes for Grandmother feeding program. We visited Calvary Chapels and churches across the region, strengthening them up for the spiritual and physical battles that would soon come to Easter Europe. We had an outreach for Christian high school students from across Russia. The

last night of the outreach, you could feel the moving of the Holy Spirit, and when the invitation was given, every high school student responded to the call for a life of radical commitment. Everyone in the room came forward, dropped to their knees, tears streamed down their faces, and said yes to live a completely sold-out life for Christ. Even with all the work being done, I could not shake the uneasy sense that something was about to happen. On February 24, Russia invaded Ukraine with the full power of its military.

As believers, it is always caring for people because it was Jesus who died for the people and showed us by His example that we are called to care for those who are suffering, lost, hopeless, and in need. Large amounts of Ukrainian civilians—predominantly women, children, and the elderly—are being targeted and killed by Russian forces. Russian troops are committing unthinkable atrocities against humanity. They are pulling mothers and daughters out of their homes and raping them, then killing them and leaving their motionless bodies on the street. We are

speaking from firsthand accounts having been in Ukraine, seeing the bodies of those who were raped, and killed, with their hands bound behind their backs. I know these things are very hard things to read, and they are even harder to write about. I have to take all that I know and condense it down significantly.

When Russia attacked Ukraine, women and children of all ages fled to the borders of Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Moldova, and Georgia. Their husbands and sons remained to fight the Russians and to defend their homeland against the invaders. In all of this, the most needy and neglected group have been the elderly widows.

Potatoes for Grandmothers Ukraine is an extension of the food and housing support Far Reaching Ministries (FRM) has provided to the elderly in Russia for many

years. The needs of the elderly across Ukraine are massive. Many elderly women, like Natasha, whose tiny cottage, the only thing she had left, was destroyed by a Russian missile. She literally has no family alive to care for her, and she receives no help from the government or community. When we met her, she was living in a corner of an old chicken coop made up of mostly rusting chicken wire. She told us that her home was all she had left in the world, and nobody would drive her from her land.

Winter this year is projected to be one of the harshest in years. We immediately purchased and delivered a temporary metal home for Natasha and have committed to her that we would make sure that she has the necessary food to survive the winter.

With the Russian/Ukraine war continuing, there are far too many grandmothers who have no means to keep warm or feed themselves. Death from starvation has already begun in Ukraine. People are being shot simply for leaving their hiding places to find food and water. Ukrainian civilians are being dragged from their hiding locations and executed, then dumped into mass graves and ditches. Because of the war, many elderly women have no family left, no community, and no organization to help them. That is where we have already stepped in with the body of Christ. We will continue to seek out

and care for this needy group, one destitute grandmother at a time.

By the time you read this Christmas update, Vicky, and I, along with several rotating teams, will have been in and out of Ukraine numerous times. We will continue to document what we are seeing, both tragic developments, as well as countless miracles. In response to the war's devastating effects on civilians, we have purchased, delivered, and installed over 55 winterized-portable metal homes to families who already lost everything, and would freeze to death during the European winter. We have outfitted and are supporting a network of Ukrainian chaplains who are in frontline-combat zones caring for the wounded and traumatized, as well as burying all those who are being killed. We have purchased and provided protective equipment (bulletproof vests, etc.) for chaplains, pastors, and those serving in the Ukraine military. We have been feeding 15,000+ civilians and helping several thousand families whose lives have been decimated by Russia's military. With winter here, FRM purchased the commercial equipment required to cut large amounts of wood for heating and cooking to ensure that thousands of families do not freeze to death during the winter.

God has orchestrated a network of Calvary Chapels in the region, and Christian ministry workers across

Eastern Europe, years before Russia invaded Ukraine. Believers from Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Georgia, and others are working tirelessly for the people of Ukraine, and to bring Christ to the entire former Soviet Empire. We never reflect Christ better than when we are doing what His Word tells us.

When I was hungry you fed me...
Matthew 25:35-40

This year, the Potatoes for Grandmothers Christmas outreach will be for the elderly of Ukraine. We can get one elderly person through the winter for \$500. We have had to raise the cost because firewood will be needed by many, and cutting, loading, and transporting it to those who will need it most is very difficult.



WOMAN SUFFERING FROM LOSS OF HOME

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS ONE THOUSAND MORE SOULS

We had promised the body of Christ last year that when we went into Afghanistan, we would not stop until we had rescued 1,000 Afghan citizens from the Taliban. As of October, we have rescued over 1,200 people from being murdered. Brent told me this good news around the 4th of October that we had accomplished and kept our promise and had not lost one soul entrusted to us. There were people who were caught and killed, that we had been asked by other organizations to rescue, but they were not in our care. They were in hiding in someone else's safe house and were captured by the Taliban before they could be transferred to one of our safe locations. Brent said, "Wes, what do you want to do with the many thousands still living in hiding and terror?" I told Brent that we were to continue as long as possible and save as many as we are able.

Brent then shared that we had become the go-to people that everyone was calling, asking for help. But he said, in frustration, that while everyone wants us to help, they are not giving financially to rescue their own people. Some just do not have anything, but what frustrated Brent was the lack of even trying to raise support. And we have been contacted by just about every Christian and secular organization out there.

I could look at this from the perspective that: It is not our responsibility; we have rescued our people. But you have to see it from the perspective of what if you were the last person not to be rescued fleeing from the Nazis?

You see the train pulling away and being told coldly that there is no more room as the enemy army is coming up over the hill, and you are Jewish, and the terror you would feel. Think of a parent on a ship, pulling out to sea, when you spot your three-year-old child alone on the beach crying, wondering where is mommy. We can never view things the way the world does. I know if I saw my child or any child, I would dive from the ship

and face what was coming ahead. So, we must not allow our hearts to be weary when so much is at stake for so many people.

I have been involved in countries at war for the last 26 years, and one of the most difficult things I have experienced is seeing masses of people fleeing

as refugees on the road as far as the eye can see. You see clusters of people in groups of five, six, and seven because they are families. Then, all of a sudden, you see one child alone by itself and the bewildered look in the child's eyes. No backpack, no water or food; looking right and left, you can feel the fear. And when you walk up and ask where the family is, they just burst into tears and sob uncontrollably. You put your hand on the shoulder and tell the little one not to worry, we will help you, and they just put their little heads on you and how the tears flow. At that point, they follow you everywhere because they are afraid you may not come back for them if they lose sight of you. Once they have been fed, they just collapse in your arms from exhaustion.



SAVING FAMILIES

In one particular place in Sudan, many were dying of starvation, and we had set up a medical tent. I remember walking in and seeing a little boy who was dying from starvation and had defecated all over himself; the stench from this was very hard to handle. We did not have medical gloves, so I went to my backpack and retrieved my towel and washcloth. Next, I got a bucket of water and soap and picked up the filth with my hands. Then, I washed and cleaned the boy. Afterward, I used my last clean t-shirt to give this little boy a sleeping gown. Later, Michael, who was South Sudanese and had worked with me in my early years in Sudan, came up to me and said, "Wes, I am ashamed of myself." I looked at him and asked why? He said, "Before you came in, many Americans and South Sudanese came in and pretended not to notice the child's condition. But then you came in and went to work on him." He then said, "When you left, all the soldiers were talking and saying can you believe that this white man cleaned that child with his hands? Everyone felt ashamed, and we pretended we did not notice, but you could smell it a mile away." Then, he said, "Brother, you are the one who will receive the reward." I do not share this for any reason other than to say do not miss the treasures of heaven over such small difficulties.

Right now, the cost to rescue one life in Afghanistan is about \$4,500. For myself, I would make it a goal to save one life this next year. Think folks, for many of us, we will never have the chance to save a life—most people never get that opportunity. But you can know that if you invest, you will be the one when the Lord says, "who will rescue one of mine?" And you said, "Here am I Lord; send me."

This Christmas, I want to thank all who made it possible to rescue the 1,200 Afghan citizens. Through your giving, many have been discipled and will be citizens of a new Kingdom. My prayer now is that we will save a thousand more.

Merry Christmas

Wes and Vicky Bentley

*"You can not gain victories unless
you go through battles."*



**"In heavenly armor
you will enter the land,
but the battle belongs to the Lord."**

UKRAINE: NATION IN CRISIS



A HOME FOR THE HOMELESS

Ukraine continues to be under siege and needs our prayers and support.

Thankfully, Far Reaching Ministries already has missionaries and pastors working in Ukraine. We are currently feeding 3,000 families per month and will continue to do so until we can find a humane and permanent solution. To help with feeding a family the cost is just \$75 a month. We also have an urgent need to provide displaced Ukrainian refugees with a simple temporary winterized home in safe locations. Without having shelter, these people will be in great danger of freezing to death this winter. The cost of these homes is \$4,500 for each.

All donations will be used solely for this ministry effort. Even if the war ends in the next few weeks, it will be years before families are able to rebuild their homes and repair their lives that were shattered. The spiritual needs will be great.

If you would like to help with these urgent needs, please mark **"Ukraine Crisis"** and or **"Homes for Ukrainians"** on the enclosed gift card along with your donation.

AFGHANISTAN - SAVE A LIFE \$4,500



The situation for Christians in Afghanistan continues to be dire. All other organizations have stopped efforts to rescue Christians still at imminent risk of being discovered and killed by the Taliban.

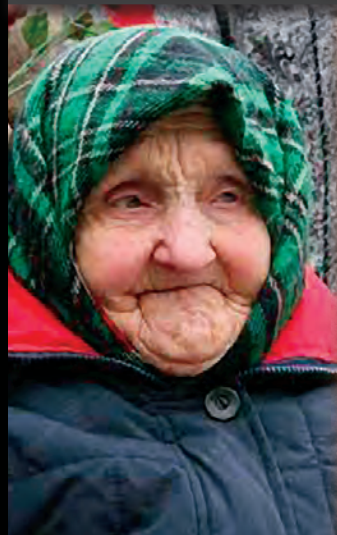
FRM has been called to protect those who can not protect themselves, especially women, children, and grandparents. To date, we have safely extracted 1,200 individuals and have requests for 3,500 more to be rescued immediately. These individuals are living in constant danger from the Taliban, ISIS-K, Al-Qaeda fighters. Our top priority is getting them to safety by every means necessary.

Due to the extreme danger, this rescue operation continues to be high in risk and financial cost. At this moment, the Body of Christ can help us rescue those who are suffering the worst.

We are the only tangible hope that Afghan Christians have between life and death. To give immediately, go to www.frmusa.org/go or call our U.S. office at +1 (951) 677-4474. You may also give by marking **"Afghanistan"** on the enclosed gift card along with your donation.

POTATOES FOR GRANDMOTHERS

UKRAINE



This year we are extending our Potatoes for Grandmothers program to include elderly women in Ukraine. With the crisis of the on-going war, feeding the elderly has become an urgent matter. Far Reaching Ministries will care for as many as we are able to. Just \$500 provides basic food items like,

potatoes, beans, rice, flour, and sugar. If you would count it a privilege to be part of the huge blessing, please indicate **"Potatoes for Grandmothers—Ukraine"** on the enclosed gift card.

Together we will "pour ourselves out for the hungry, and satisfy the desire of the afflicted" - Isaiah 58:10



NORTH AMERICAN HEADQUARTERS

38615 Calistoga Drive, Suite 100

Murrieta, CA 92563

+1 (951) 677-4474 info@frmusa.org

© Far Reaching Ministries

www.frmusa.org

Wes Bentley
FAR REACHING
MINISTRIES



Vicky Bentley
FAR REACHING
MINISTRIES AVIATION

