



ONE THOUSAND CHILDREN

I recently sent Dave, Shawn, and Edward to a moderate Islamic country where they would meet with many Iranian believers working in the underground church in Iran. I have purposely not included their last names for security reasons. While this country is more moderate, they still had to operate in secrecy. Had they been discovered, they all would have been put in jail, then given long prison terms. Edward runs our Ghost Operations, which, in large, is to oversee and coordinate operations in very dangerous places.

Alma, an Iranian woman, and her husband met our team in an undisclosed location in this moderate Islamic country. Her physical and emotional trauma could be felt by all as she wept deeply and told her story. She said, "They burst into our home in the middle of the night when we were sleeping. They pointed guns and video cameras at us, yelling at us to get out of bed." All she said that she could think about in those moments was her young son screaming from his bedroom, and she could not do anything to protect him. Heavily armed men kept them separated, screaming constant threats

at them for the crime of being a Christian. They were handcuffed, blindfolded, removed from their home, then taken to an interrogation center where they were placed in individual cells. Alma was interrogated daily about her faith and other underground church members for two weeks. Her male interrogators threatened her constantly with rape and physical beatings. Why they did not rape her, could only be the protective hand of the Lord.

Alma knows several Christian women who were arrested and raped multiple times to humiliate and degrade them, causing them to break down and give up the names of the believers they were connected with.

While Alma was detained, she was deprived of sleep, kept hungry, thirsty, and not allowed to use the toilet or clean herself. The abductors told her that she, her husband, and her son would be executed for being Christians. She said they told her several times that all her problems would stop if she simply renounced Jesus and returned to Islam. All she had to do in that briefest of moments was to deny her faith in Jesus, and

**NEVER
RETURNED**

she would have her child back, and they could go home. She told those interrogating her that she knew who she, her husband, and her son belonged to and where they were going when they leave this temporal life. After a quiet and thoughtful pause, she said, "This physical life is temporal. Our life with Christ is eternal. My life without Jesus was empty. Now it's full."

When my team spoke to Alma, this was still fresh in her mind because it had recently happened. Miraculously, after being held for two weeks, they were released and able to flee Iran. As Alma's husband spoke, he said they do not want to focus on all the bad in their country toward Christians. They prefer to focus instead on all the good that God is doing throughout the Muslim world.

Muslims around the Middle East are experiencing Jesus in visions and dreams and coming to a radically transformative faith. As persecution increases, so do the opportunities to share Jesus with others. As a result, the underground church is also experiencing tremendous growth.

The team met with five underground pastors and ministry workers from Iran, who live at risk every single day. All five have already been arrested and imprisoned for their faith. Yet, their hardships have only increased their courage. They are working tirelessly to prepare and send out more missionaries across Muslim nations where foreign missionaries are not allowed. This is the reason Far Reaching Ministries (FRM) supports underground churches that have accepted the call.

Pastors in Islamic nations must teach their underground churches the advanced art of cyber security and hiding a person's digital identity. In Muslim countries where we are working, there are so-called Morality Police, who deploy teams to scour social media sites, wi-fi hotspots, and villages looking to penetrate underground church networks. These underground believers worship like no other that my team has experienced. The passion in their songs to Jesus floods the room with reverence and awe. They know absolute joy because they were raised in countries that leverage shame, fear, and violence to suppress the people. These hated and hunted Christians sing passionately, outstretching arms to heaven, dropping on their knees and faces.

A young, hip-looking guy picked up a guitar in an adjacent room where my team was having coffee. He began singing and playing the guitar beautifully on what everyone else had deemed broken and useless. He played so powerfully and passionately that everyone moved quietly and reverently into the room where he was. Watching him with his eyes closed, singing personally

to Jesus, you could sense Christ was in the room with him. This young man was born in a radicalized Islamic country. He grew up knowing nothing about the world other than what he was taught in Islamic religious schools. As a young man, he did not have the same views as his hardliner teachers and relatives. He secretly resented Islam because it brought so much misery to his country. As a teenager, he saw what he describes as a "brilliant light and a man standing in my room with me." He said the man was very real and told him about Himself, Jesus the Christ. In an Islamic country, there are no obvious places to go to find out more about a Jewish Messiah named Jesus, so he went to his local mosque. He knew enough to know what happens to people accused of being Christians, so he decided to read the entire Koran to find Jesus for himself. After doing so, he knew that the Jesus he met in his bedroom was not anywhere in the Koran. Through a series of miracles, he found a Bible and began voraciously reading it. His faith exploded, and his boldness and courage increased. Five years after meeting Jesus, he has planted and currently helps support an underground network of churches spreading into several other Islamic nations. He, too, has the vision to send local missionaries across the entire Islamic world and out to the West.

My team spent additional time with underground doctors and pastors in other persecuted countries. Dr. Yusuf works among the poorest of the poor in his country. He sets up temporary medical clinics in remote villages and cares for patients all day and into the early morning hours. His team sleeps for a few hours before the process starts all over again. He treats numerous diseases and sees nothing but despair and hopelessness. He does this because he may be the only compassion these outcast people will ever experience. After caring so gently for the sick, he then tells the entire community





SHAWN HUGGING AN IRANIAN BROTHER

about the special place Jesus has for the poor, sick, and outcast, and many come to faith in Christ. His team works to establish local home churches and appoints a teacher who has been equipped to lead an underground church.

Dr. Yusuf is unpaid because his patients have no money to pay him for their care. He was asked about the value of his medical degree and why he does not leave all the hardship and become a doctor somewhere in Europe, making \$200,000 USD a year. He could even send his young children to western schools so they could grow up and have a different, much easier life. He would still be able to help many people with his medical degree, get paid well for his skills, and send money to help the poorest of the poor. Dr. Yusuf responded in a hushed, humble tone, saying, "The Father gave me a valuable skill to heal the sick, and my family and I agree that we will only use it to bring the poor and oppressed to Jesus."

In the same country where Dr. Yusuf lives, another team of ours runs an underground missionary training program with the intention of sending missionaries to every Muslim country. They have already trained 200 full-time missionaries. Support for missionaries varies from country to country. The average monthly wage in Iran was \$440 per person in 2022, but it is much lower for Christians. This does not include anything for evangelical outreach, such as Bibles. Normally in this country, family members live together to support themselves. One of the things we try very hard to do at FRM is to support the needs of our missionaries. I had a pastor once tell me that his church supported 150 missionaries, but what they were doing was sending each one \$100 a month. This, at best, should be called partial support. It would have been better to choose 15 and support each of them with \$1,000 a month. When FRM comes alongside people, we want them to be able to do the work and not be worried about how to eat and

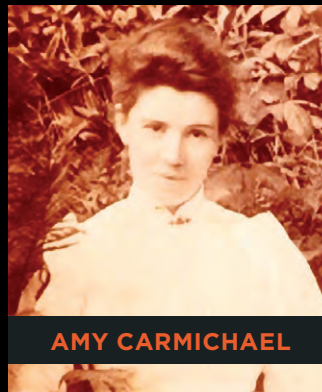
pay the rent. When you fear prison and the loss of life, you have enough to be worried about. Fear is a terrible thing. I personally do not feel afraid when under fire for myself, but it is hard to control when you do not know what is happening to your family. For the men, not knowing if some filthy person is abusing their wife in the next room could and does break many—even the strongest of believers.

We are working hard to increase cyber security for these believers in Iran and many other things. Preparing everything from safe rooms in homes to early warning detection systems is at the forefront of our concerns.

Our pastors and missionaries in Iran could use funds for just about everything. As always, what you send will be given with no administrative cost taken out. I look forward to being able to tell the brothers and sisters in Iran that refreshment and resupply is on its way. I will be flying to an undisclosed country soon to meet with missionaries and plan how to reach people with the Gospel where it is forbidden.

Money for Burma has already started coming in, and I want to thank those who have given, we are dispatching the funds to them as fast as we can.

My friend, Luke, has told me that I have enough fruit for ten lifetimes. And with that, one could say I have done my part. Why take on more dangerous countries when others around you argue that you cannot save all the children in Latin America and around the world. Truthfully, these last two years have been extremely difficult for me to personally try to take care of so many when I am weary. But, just this week Jean Davis, the wife of Pastor Bob Davis of North Country Chapel, wrote a letter to my wife. We know that both Bob and Jean pray for us very fervently.



AMY CARMICHAEL

In Jean's letter to Vicky, she sent this encouragement from Amy Carmichael: *There are times when conditions are such that it seems foolish to go on increasing responsibilities; and it is not a thing that should be done lightly. But the alternative is to send to destruction children whom we could save; for to refuse to save a child, if the power to save be yours, is to do that dreadful thing. And how could we do that with the Word of our Lord and Saviour sounding in our ears, Whoso shall receive one such little child*

in My name receiveth Me? As to the poor and ill, we could not forget His other word, I was hungry, I was thirsty, I was a stranger, I was sick. Has He ever told us to consider conditions?

Amy Carmichael was a missionary in India for 55 years. Once she left for the mission field she never returned to England. She never took a furlough, instead started an orphanage that saved the lives of over 1,000 children.

Wes Bentley

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Far Reaching Ministries

MISSIONARIES AND PASTORS IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES



Our pastors and missionaries in Iran could use funds for just about everything, as wages for Christians are much lower. Their salary is barely enough to pay for their food and rent. They do not

have any leftover monies to pay for evangelical outreaches, such as Bibles.

Far Reaching Ministries is also working with pastors and missionaries in Iran to increase cyber security and many other things within the underground church.

If you would like to be part of blessing these pastors and missionaries with much-needed funds to further the Gospel in this country, where it is forbidden, please mark **"Refreshment and Resupply for Iran"** on the enclosed gift card along with your donation.

BURMA PERSECUTION CRISIS



**SEVERELY WOUNDED
BY BURMA ARMY**

Far Reaching Ministries (FRM) has been working with our Ghost Operations team to protect Christian Karenni people in Burma. They have been violently persecuted by the Burmese Army. Many have been killed, their villages have been burnt down, and women have been raped.

We have an immediate need to raise an additional \$100,000 to provide basic needs to the people of Burma. We want to thank all those who previously gave to this cause, but the \$400,000 raised has already been spent on the people to feed and care for them medically and spiritually. FRM has committed to help with this ongoing crisis. As always, every donation received for this purpose will be sent to bring relief to those suffering under the brutal hand of evil men.

If you would like to help with this urgent need, please mark **"Burma Persecution"** on the enclosed gift card along with your donation.



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