

# PERSECUTION

# JOURNEYS

*eight testimonies of salvation, redemption, persecution,  
faith, miracles, and freedom*

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# Letter from the President



“

... All this was a long time ago, I remember,  
And I would do it again, but set down  
This set down  
This: were we led all that way for  
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,  
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and  
death,  
But had thought they were different; this Birth was  
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.  
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,  
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,  
With an alien people clutching their gods.  
I should be glad of another death.

— “Journey of The Magi,” T.S. Eliot

One of my favorite poems is “The Journey of the Magi” from T.S. Eliot. T.S. Eliot was probably the most famous and influential poet of his day, and this poem is an autobiographical piece on his journey to Christ using the metaphor of the Magi’s journey to the Christ’s birth.

I am always struck by the brutal honesty of his struggle to faith and the loss that came with it. In short, he is left a stranger in a strange land, an alien surrounded by strange peoples “clutching their gods” in an “old dispensation.”

I was reminded of this poem as we assembled these testimonies of the persecuted. Their journeys to faith or freedom are often a hard and bitter agony, even if the ultimate prize (their new birth) is beyond what they could have hoped for.

I hope you are inspired by them and gain insight into the people we serve. Please join me in bandaging their wounds, building their churches, and caring for the widowed?

We will use your gifts efficiently, effectively, and prayerfully. I promise.

*Jeff King  
President, ICC*

# DAUGHTER — OF THE — MOST HIGH

*The Heroic Testimony of an Iranian Woman's  
Journey from Prostitution to Redemption,  
Imprisonment to Freedom*

Farrin ran away from an abusive home at a young age and did whatever she could to survive, sometimes even begging for assistance from strangers. Among the first was a Persian man she met in the park.

*"The Persian guy took me to his home and there were two guys from Afghanistan, and they took me and abused me. It was terrible. I cried and didn't like it and asked them to stop, but they didn't stop. After this situation, no matter where I tried to sleep at night... they always asked if they were going to be able to use my body."*

Farrin decided that rather than selling her body for a place to sleep, she might as well earn some money. She became a prostitute for five years before meeting a family who she later found out were Christians. The family helped Farrin rent an apartment and begin to feel a love that she had never experienced before.



**After Farrin was rescued from prostitution and shown the love of God, she vowed to never go back to living in the darkness.**

#### Weeping with Those Who Weep

"When I started telling them the stories of my real life... I was crying, but they cried more than me. [Everyone else judged me], but they were so loving, giving me their heart and taking me in their arms. I was wondering why they showed so much love."

Because of their love, Farrin had the strength to begin life anew. Farrin never again questioned the source of that love.

One night, in her loneliness, Farrin again prayed for comfort.

"When my prayer finished, I came and prepared a sleeping place. I closed my eyes and fell asleep. Do you know who came and cared about me? It was Jesus. It wasn't a dream because I felt so terrible and my body was hurting and every time when I woke up, I just saw that Jesus is beside me and He is sitting there and caring for me. Do you know what He told me? He told me,

'You are never, never alone. You were never alone before... He washed all the circumstances of my childhood away, all the bad things that I experienced in my childhood. I never felt such a love.'

Farrin was never the same again.

"A lot of people told me, 'You are really a joyful, happy girl.' And my answer to these people is, 'For twenty-one years I cried. But from the day that I knew Jesus, He put His joy, His happiness, into my heart and still since the day that I met Him, there is no place to be sad.'"

Farrin soon began praying for a godly spouse, and it wasn't long before she met and married Rahim, a man who also went through tremendous hardship before knowing Jesus (see his testimony on page 8).

#### Imprisonment for Loving Jesus

On September 4th, 2010, while worshipping with friends at a house church, Farrin, Rahim, and the others were arrested by Iran's state security agents for their Christian activity. Farrin was separated from her husband and held in solitary confinement for 11 days.

*"I was under such huge pressure that I thought I was sleeping or dreaming. One time, when [the guards] left me for twenty minutes alone, I started crying and screaming to the Lord. I asked the Lord, 'Why did you let them to do this with us? If you didn't want it or didn't allow it, they couldn't do this with us.' Suddenly, I heard the voice of God in my heart, and it reminded me of a prayer I had made. I had previously told the Lord, 'If you see the strength in me, send me to prison.' He told me, 'I'm seeing the strength in you, and now continue, go on.'*

It took time for Farrin to see the same strength in herself, but, though afraid, she remained faithful to the Lord.

#### Freedom in Christ Alone

Interrogators demanded that Farrin write down the names of the Christians she knew in return for her and her husband's release. She took the pen and started to write, but again heard the Lord's voice, "With whose hands are you going out of this prison? With mine or someone else's?"

Farrin remembered that without Christ, she had no freedom. It became clear that she must wait on His timing for her release. A sudden strength swept over her. She told the guards she would not make the confession they wanted.



**For twenty-one years I cried. But from the day that I knew Jesus, He put His joy, His happiness, into my heart and still since the day that I met Him, there is no place to be sad.**

---

"What are you going to do? You're going to kill me? Jesus had already told me in the Bible that to go after Him means there will be persecution."

before the Lord... I just know that all over the world there were people coming together to bring their hearts before God and asking before God to let us go."

Throughout her entire imprisonment, where inmates were routinely abused, tortured, and raped, no one laid a hand on Farrin. Farrin and Rahim spent eight months in prison. Though forced to leave the country after their release for their own safety, Farrin and Rahim continue their ministry today among Iranians living abroad. Through it all, Farrin continues to praise God.

"It was the strength of Jesus that brought me forward. And I just want to pronounce and profess that all glory belongs to Him. He didn't allow me to fall... or to tremble in my faith." †



# RESCUED FROM THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS

*A Former Satan-Worshippers Testimony of New Life in the Father*

Rahim grew up in poverty. Having run away from home following his father's death, Rahim sometimes lived with his aunt, sometimes slept on the street, and for three years, worked as a carpenter. Earning only enough to pay for the roof over his head, Rahim's mission in life soon became to get out of Iran completely. When most of his schemes failed, he finally pretended to be a Christian so he could apply for asylum with the UN.

His ploy couldn't have been further from the truth. Rahim's hardships had actually developed into a deep resentment for God. He started a group he called 'Against God' where witchcraft was practiced and evil became such a part of his life that Rahim felt the invisible but physical touch of what he described as a demon. He told ICC, "I knew that God was there, but God was doing nothing for me, so I went to Satan instead."

Still trying to claim asylum, Rahim needed to know more about Christianity, so he found a Christian who was willing to answer his questions and who gave him a Bible. As Rahim began reading it, a voice in his head tried to convince him to stop.

*"I have lived so long with you and I have done everything with you, but I am still in a bad situation and always in a bad mood,"* Rahim told the demon. *"I just want to see what the Bible is saying."*

Attending church with his new Christian friend, Rahim began asking God why He had ignored him during his trials. Scriptures revealed to Rahim that God had always been there and that Rahim must surrender his life completely by walking away from his sin. Still, the evil voice inside Rahim's head continued to torment him.

#### From Darkness to Light

During one church service, Rahim was unexpectedly called to the front of the congregation. Some women approached and began praying over him. Although Rahim thought the situation was a bit awkward, he did not mind. "They were very beautiful," said Rahim, who was attending services as much to find a wife as to learn about Christianity. But Rahim was growing increasingly uncomfortable. During the prayers, he felt a painful struggle inside him. He found himself weeping and aching. Finally, it stopped.

*"I became free. It was suddenly like my eyes were open," Rahim said. "I did not even have the strength to think about anything. It was like I was seeing everything for the first time."*

Rahim's newfound freedom changed every aspect of his life. He no longer wanted to flee Iran, but only longed to grow in faith. He soon met Farrin, his wife, at a Christian gathering and was introduced to her friends who were instrumental in Farrin's life (see Farrin's testimony on page 4). Together they began serving in the church and evangelizing.

#### Imprisonment

On September 4th, 2010, Iranian security forces raided a house church and arrested Rahim, his wife, and other Christians. Rahim was immediately put

in solitary confinement. Though he would stay in solitary confinement for the next 43 days and endure intense interrogation, Rahim never stopped rejoicing in God.

*"When they put me in the prison and shut the door, I just fell on my knees and kissed the ground. I said to God, 'You have got a purpose that we are here.'"*

Interrogations were intense that first month, Rahim recalls.

*"The whole goal was to get me to confess that [a certain pastor] had forced me to become a Christian."*

The hardest part for Rahim, however, was not the interrogations, but hearing his wife crying in a nearby cell. *"I heard the crying and weeping of Farrin... It was very hard; very heavy. I was a person that was always fighting, but I was not able to do anything. The only thing I could do was to find refuge in God."*

#### A Friend of Sinners

After his time in solitary confinement, Rahim was moved to another prison where he had more interaction with

other inmates. Rahim remembered praying before his arrest to be sent *"where suffering is, even if it is in a prison."* Several people gave their lives to Christ through his ministry in prison.

However, circumstances in prison never improved. Rahim witnessed the killing of a fellow inmate by a guard and heard the screams from countless suicides. Even so, Rahim did all he could to help ease the suffering of prisoners. He even learned how to smuggle blankets and clothes into the prison to give to those who were freezing in cells with open windows in the snowy winter. *"I knew that some of these people were killers and thieves and dealers, but Jesus was a friend of sinners. So, I started to disciple these people."*

The only place Rahim was not being watched was in the prison mosque. Every week, he would gather the new believers in the mosque and they would worship together, proclaiming the name of Christ. Rahim also witnessed miraculous healings of the sick. A couple of inmates who had long-term prison sentences were suddenly released without explanation after becoming Christians.

Rahim and Farrin were finally released after eight months in prison. *"The fact is that they had no excuse to detain us in the first place,"* Rahim said. *"My wife and I are both from dysfunctional families and backgrounds. We have been directly touched and saved by our Lord Jesus Christ, who turned our lives around. For this reason and to thank God for his deliverance, we only spoke of our own personal experiences with Jesus Christ to people and especially other social victims. After eight months I guess they realized they were wrong about us, and caught on to the fact that we are but simple witnesses to Christ."* 

**"I knew that some of these people were killers and thieves and dealers, but Jesus was a friend of sinners. So, I started to disciple them..."**



Rahim went from resenting God to worshipping God. When he was imprisoned for his faith alongside his wife, his faith was challenged and strengthened all the more.

# THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE FATHER

*Three Christian prisoners recount the miraculous work of God behind locked doors*

## **Yohannes' Journey**

Born into an evangelical Christian family in a country that has imprisoned more than 3,000 Christians for their faith, Yohannes (not real name) was passionate about his faith and practiced it despite the danger of persecution. Yohannes credits his years in Eritrea's compulsory military service to his close relationship with the Lord, recalling how the Father often protected him in battle. He was ready to pay any price for the sake of the gospel, but little did he know that he would spend over eight years in prison for his faith.

It was on March 15, 2002, that Yohannes and his other Christian colleagues were arrested for attending a church service. For the next eight years and six months, he was taken from one prison to another. He describes his ordeal in his own words:

*"We were only given three pieces of bread, two cups of tea and some lentils per day. At one point, they put me in a metal container where it is cold when the weather is cold and very hot when the weather is hot. Once they close the container, they don't open it. Some prisoners who suffered diarrhea had no choice but to relieve themselves inside the container."*

*They put up to 24 people in a container."*

Yohannes endured torture, beatings, threats and other forms of harassment during his time in prison. He told us that nothing could have prepared him to suffer this kind of abuse, saying, *"I had thought that you could always rejoice in the midst of hardship. I had thought that I wouldn't feel the pain when faced with persecution. But I was wrong. I was very conscious about my pain throughout the prison time. What kept me strong was not the fact that I didn't feel the pain, it was the fact that I rejoiced in the hope that we had in God."*

All Yohannes had to do was sign a document renouncing his faith to end his suffering.

The Lord also spoke to him through dreams. He told us, *"The Lord was so close to me when I was in the prison. I sensed that I would be kept in prison for a long time. God spoke to me through His word, through situations, through people, and so many other ways."*

Yohannes and his Christian friends shared a smuggled Bible in the prison. They cut books from the Bible and shared them among themselves. Recounting his favorite Bible verses while in prison, Yohannes passionately speaks about Biblical passages referring to persecution. One of those passages is Matthew 16:24 where Jesus told His followers, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

Yohannes also reflected on the conviction that he had about his faith. He recalled that when many of Jesus' followers deserted Him, He asked His disciples, "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Yohannes knew he could never leave his Lord.

At one point, the security guards discovered that Yohannes was reading the Bible. Yohannes told us, *"A security guard took me to a room and severely assaulted me. The whole time he was mocking*

*me, saying, 'Let Jesus come and save you.'*"

Despite the abuse he faced in prison, today Yohannes credits this time to the growth of his spiritual life:

*"Despite the challenge, it was a wonderful time because we didn't know anyone except the Lord. It was not convenient for our flesh, but it was a great time for our spiritual life."*

Prison was also a time of witnessing to non-believers. Many people came to believe as the result of hearing the gospel, but Yohannes told us that it was not his words alone that brought people to Christ:

*"They were impressed with our faithfulness in working hard when we were taken to field to work on farms. They were impressed that we didn't have bad manners. We never collaborated with any evil works. All this impressed them."*

## **Zerhari's Journey**

Zerhari was a new Christian when the Eritrean authorities arrested him. He heard and accepted the Gospel from his fellow soldiers in the Eritrean military. He was detained nine months later. As a new Christian, the challenge of facing persecution was not easy. But the Lord gave him special protection.

Zerhari detailed the physical

hardships he faced while in prison:

*"I was put in a metal shipping container with 24 other people. The weather could be very hot, at times reaching 118 degrees. Some of the prisoners would smoke. I became sick due to malaria. I weighed about 100 pounds after losing a lot of weight (due to the sickness). I was not given medical attention"*

Though he was still new to the faith, Zerhari already had a strong conviction about following Jesus Christ. He was ready to die for his faith, saying, *"When I saw a Christian brother dying due to lack of medical attention, I started to prepare myself as well. I knew that my brother went to a better glory when he died. He went to a better place. My life also belongs to Christ."*

According to him, Zerhari's most difficult time was when his non-believing parents would come to visit him in prison. The security guards would tell his parents, *"We could release him immediately and he would be going home with you if you convince him to recant his faith."* His mother and father would plead with him to recant. It was so difficult for Zerhari to see them crying, he at one point succumbed to the pressure and

told his mother that he would sign a document renouncing his faith. But that night, he could find no peace.

After two sleepless nights, Zerhari finally made up his mind that it was better for him to suffer in prison than deny Christ. He said, *"I prayed for God to give me the grace to be faithful to the point of death. I also asked for mercy. Then my peace was restored."*

## Hagos' Journey

Hagos was imprisoned for preaching the gospel and bringing many military personnel to Christ. He and other believers used to conduct small group meetings with the new believers.

When Hagos was first arrested, he was held in a nine by nine foot underground dungeon for six months. He was then moved into solitary confinement in a small room about 2 feet wide and 8 feet long. Left in total darkness day and night and unable to move, Hagos told us, *"I was harshly treated because they considered me a leader of Christians. Because of the mistreatment, I was unable to stand up and couldn't see well. Lack of proper diet exacerbated my misery."*

We know that Hagos was not really alone during his time of solitary confinement. The

Holy Spirit was with him in that small room. Hagos, who is a singer, received several songs during those trying times. His songs have powerful messages of glorifying God in the midst of challenging times. In one of his songs, he sings about the demise of kingdoms that resist God.

### A Miraculous Escape

By the Father's grace, Hagos, Yohannes and Zerhari eventually found one another after being moved to the same prison. The Father then proceeded to put a series of numbers on Hagos' heart. At first, he didn't fully understand what they meant, but he and his newfound friends gradually came to understand that it was the Lord telling them the exact day and time to escape.

Though Hagos was initially concerned he may not be able to escape due to the deterioration of his legs during his imprisonment, God encouraged him by leading him to John 5:8. The verse is Jesus speaking to a disabled man by the pool of Bethesda — "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk."

### Three Worlds Collide

Determined to follow the Lord's leading, Hagos, Yohannes and

Zerhari prepared to escape the prison at 7pm on September 8th. Though the three men carefully planned their escape, the security guards caught them attempting to flee and opened fire. While Yohannes and Zerhari were able to escape, Hagos fell after only two minutes of running, unable to continue due to the weakness of his legs. Trusting in the word the Father had given him before his escape, Hagos began to pray, *"God, I can't run and escape. I don't want to be re-arrested. Please bring down heavy rain so the guards will stop chasing me."*

As soon as he was done praying, a heavy rain started pouring, accompanied by strong wind. After the guards gave up the chase and Hagos regained his strength, he started to walk. He couldn't explain how he was able to walk other than attributing it to God's empowerment! In awe of what the Lord had already done for him, he cried, *"God, you do hear prayers!"*

Hagos even started to run! The only problem was with his eye sight. His eyes had been weakened due to years of being detained in dark rooms and an underground dungeon, and now he was forced to run under the cover of night. He needed light to see, so he prayed again to ask God for light. God answered with lightning. Successive streaks of lightning lit up the night sky

just enough to give Hagos the light he needed to travel.

### Kind Strangers Lead the Way

Ten hours later, Hagos finally found a safe place to sleep in the jungle. When he awoke and continued his journey, he came across a man who asked him where he was going. Hagos recounted his story to the stranger, even risking telling him that he was attempting to escape from Eritrea

and cross the border into Sudan. The man gave him food and water and showed him the way. After four days of walking, Hagos was free.

God showed amazing faithfulness to his servants Hagos, Yohannes and Zerhari. Yohannes arrived in Sudan six days after his escape, surviving only due to the kindness of a stranger who found him collapsed from hunger and dehydration three days into his journey. The man gave him food and

drink and helped him to find his way out of the country. Zerhari arrived in Sudan within two short days due, miraculously, to the help of a soldier who initially considered turning him in to the police so that it wouldn't be discovered that he had let a prisoner escape.

These three men have since moved to Kenya, where ICC is planning to help them open a small business. \*

**"God, I can't run and escape. I don't want to be re-arrested. Please bring down heavy rain so that the guards will stop chasing me."**





# From Drug Addict to Tortured for Christ:

## *A Story of Redemption*

Born into a Muslim family, Farzad (not real name) was raised by his aunt whose husband was an opium addict. “Their son stole opium from them and shared it with me,” Farzad told ICC. “Because of my inner anger and troubles, it was not long until I started smoking it on a normal basis.”

After three years, Farzad was so addicted that he would inject himself 16 to 20 times a day. “I realized that from my neck down there was nowhere to inject myself. No vein was available; I was damaged so badly.” Farzad went to the hospital to ask if they would inject him, but instead they called the police. When the policeman arrived, he refused

to take Farzad to the station. “Let the refuse collectors take him,” the policeman said. “I don’t want him in my car.”

“After this session at the hospital, I had lost faith in myself,” Farzad said. “I had been reduced to such a state that life wasn’t worth living after that. I decided to kill myself. Why live if I couldn’t live like a human being?”

### The Father’s Love

Late one night, Farzad attempted suicide by overdosing. Halfway through the injections, everything went black. “It was like the electricity went out,” he recalls. Suddenly, Farzad saw a man standing between two bright lights who

called him by name, saying, “Listen to me. You are not supposed to die. You are not supposed to just exist. You are supposed to go on living.”

“Who are you?” Farzad asked while trembling in fear. The voice replied, “The Father loves you so much that He sent me to save you.” Farzad’s eyes were opened and he saw his body lying on the kitchen floor as if he was looking at his dead corpse. The syringe had fallen out of his arm and blood was oozing out.

Suddenly, Farzad awoke. He immediately flushed his remaining drugs down the toilet and realized what needed

to be done. With a long road before him, he felt a strength to overcome that was not his own.

One night he relapsed by getting drunk and went to his Armenian friend’s home. His friend asked Farzad why he started drinking so much, trading one addiction for another. The friend went on to tell Farzad about the Bible. When Farzad told him about his dream, he directed him to Colossians 1:15, which says that Jesus is the “image of the invisible God.”

“When I asked my friend about the concept of embracing your enemy, he brought out the passage in the Bible. And,



Though Jesus saved Farzad, he didn't know the name of Jesus until a n Armenian friend shared the love of God with him.

“Who are you?” Farzad asked while trembling in fear. The voice replied, ‘The Father loves you so much that He sent me to save you.’

when I talked about sexual desire, he brought out the verse that says if you even look at a woman in a sexual way, then you have sinned,” Farzad said. “I was quite impressed. What a fantastic God you have, I told him.”

“Under Islam, I had lived with religious convictions that were the opposite of what I was hearing, yet the words I heard from the Bible were touching my heart.”

The Armenian friend said, “Wait. I'll show you something.” He read from John 3:16 that God loves the world enough to send His Son to save him. “Suddenly, it came to me,” Farzad said. “It was Jesus Christ who came

and saved me.” At that moment, Farzad confessed his sins and gave his life to Christ. “It was very emotional,” Farzad said. “My heart was pumping. It was the moment I will never forget.”

#### A Second Miracle

Farzad went in for a medical test following his conversion. “The doctor said I had hepatitis C. My liver was 70 percent dysfunctional and 96 percent of my blood was contaminated. The doctor said it was too late for me. There was nothing I could do,” Farzad explained.

Farzad’s sickness was announced at a church he had begun attending. “The whole church decided to fast and pray for a whole week,” Farzad said while trying to hold back tears. “No one ate anything and they had a 24-hour chain of prayers for me.”

One member had a vision and at the next service he thanked God for giving Farzad his health back. He told Farzad that God had saved him and that he should return to the doctor for a second test. The test results came up negative.

“Do you believe in miracles?” the doctor asked Farzad. “Yes, God has performed a second miracle in my life,” Farzad replied. Handing the doctor a Bible, Farzad said, “Read this so that you will know how miracles are performed.”

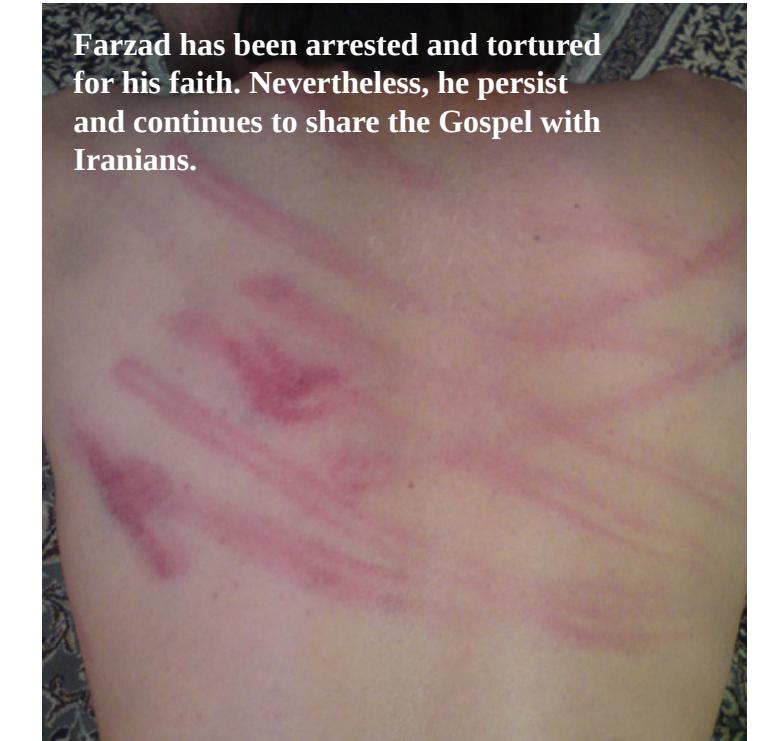
#### Tortured for Christ

Farzad began training to become an assistant pastor. After returning home to share the Gospel and baptize new believers, an informant for Iranian intelligence who had infiltrated his church group arrested him.

“They arrested me and tortured me to get names. They hung me by the feet from the ceiling and lashed me,” Farzad said.

Farzad’s uncle, a mullah who had refused to speak or even shake Farzad’s hand after his conversion, asked Iranian authorities to release Farzad temporarily so he could receive medical attention at a hospital. After the treatment, the mullah promised, Farzad would be brought back to prison. The Iranian authorities agreed.

Farzad has been arrested and tortured for his faith. Nevertheless, he persist and continues to share the Gospel with Iranians.



“I was worried about my uncle,” Farzad said. “He had promised to return me to the prison.”

One night, however, Farzad’s uncle knocked on his door. “Take your wife and children and leave the country. It’s too dangerous for you. They’re determined to kill you. Don’t worry about the bond, just leave.”

They left the next day. “We didn’t even have time to say goodbye to the family,” he said.

Today, Farzad continues his incredible ministry by teaching Iranian fellowship groups and leading worship services. Please pray for Farzad. He and his family live off a meager income provided by donations alone as they are not allowed to be employed as refugees in a foreign land. †



# Beaten, Bruised, and Left For Dead

The son of an evangelist in southern Somalia, Hasan was forced to flee his country with his family after his father was brutally murdered for his Christian faith. Little did the family know that the persecution they faced in Somalia would follow them to Kenya.

Nearing his house with supplies his mother had asked him to purchase from the Eastleigh market, Hasan was attacked by six Somali Muslims with iron rods and wooden clubs. Hasan soon lost consciousness. His assailants, thinking he was dead, dropped him off, bleeding and naked, outside the gate of a Presbyterian church as a ‘warning’ to other Christians. The church guards called his mother and immediately took him to the hospital. *“When I reached the scene of the attack, my son was lying in a pool of blood. The attackers had covered my son all over with dirt,”* Hasan’s mother told ICC.

At the hospital, Hasan received a blood transfusion and eventually regained consciousness, but a slow and arduous healing process awaited him.

*“Since the time my son was attacked, we have been spending sleepless nights due to the pain that he has been going through,”* his mother said. *“He risks losing a*

*third tooth, which is adding more pain for him. He also complains of abdominal pains; possibly he might have hurt some of his internal organs. But we are helpless; we have no money for specialized medication for him.”*

Hasan filed a report at the police station and was asked to identify his attackers. Two of the Somali men were arrested soon after, but have since been released. While police claim the Somalis had escaped, Hasan thinks that a bribe was paid for their release.

Now, out of prison, the Somali group is looking to finish the job they started. Hasan has received several phone calls threatening to kill him and other members in his family. *“When we find you again, we will not make the mistake of leaving you alive,”* Hasan recalled one caller as saying.

Hasan, his mother and five younger siblings have since been in hiding, moving from one house to another to avoid being attacked again. When ICC visited Hasan a month after the attack, he was still badly bruised, could hardly see out of his right eye, and was missing teeth. ICC is paying for Hasan’s surgery and medication, and is helping the family move into a safe neighborhood and set up a small business. ■

# LIVING WATER

*From Dream to Reality to Nightmare, One Family's Journey to Follow Jesus No Matter What*

Thirty years prior to his conversion from a Sunni Muslim background, Jasem had developed a close friendship with a Chaldean priest from Mosul, Iraq. One day, the priest encouraged Jasem to read the Bible for himself, asking, “*How else do you know where the truth lies?*”

Over the years, Jasem’s admiration of Christianity grew, but for the most part, he kept his interest in Christianity to himself until 2003 when his wife, Rabiha, had a dream that she was sick. She longed for water, but nothing could quench her thirst. When all hope was lost and her last breaths were upon her, a Christian approached and offered her a drink. “*This is the Living Water which only Christ can give,*” the Christian said. Rabiha drank and was healed.

Rabiha explained her dream to the priest and learned that Jesus called Himself the Living Water in the Bible. Jasem, who had been shying away from fully committing his life to Christ, viewed his wife’s dream as an undeniable sign from God. Soon after the dream, Jasem, Rabiha, and their eldest daughter, Ala’ā, received Jesus as Lord of their lives.

However, the family could not practice their faith openly. They would be in grave danger if their newfound faith became known. Churches would not even allow them to attend services, afraid they would be putting their whole congregation at risk if they accepted former Muslims into the congregation.

After a brief trip to Turkey to find a church that would baptize them, Jasem and Rabiha returned to Mosul to find that the bishop had been murdered just blocks from their home and that their pictures had been posted in neighborhood mosques, calling them apostates and pledging a reward for their murders.

Though they went into hiding, they were eventually discovered by a relative who entered their hotel room with a knife and gasoline. Finding only Ala’ā home, he pinned her to the ground, poured petrol over her body and lit her on fire. “*I’m doing this because you’re a Christian and you’re going to have to marry a Christian now,*” Ala’ā, who was only fourteen at the time, recalls him saying.

Ala’ā’s younger brother Muhammad found his unconscious sister on the floor and sought help. Ala’ā was confined to a hospital bed for a month before she and her family could flee Mosul. After three years in Turkey, Jasem, Rabiha, and their four children moved to a Western country. Not allowed to work as refugees, the family has struggled to survive. Jasem has been in a wheel chair since 1987 after stepping on a landmine while serving in the Iran-Iraq war. At times, their children were forced to beg on street corners for food.

In partnership with a local Christian organization that is assisting refugees, ICC was able to help with some of the family’s expenses. Please pray for the family as they settle into their new home. 

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