Survivor

THE LIFE STORY OF BENJAMIN URSHAN

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BY BENJAMIN URSHAN
AS TOLD TO GEORGIA SMELSER

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The Life Story of Benjamin D. Urshan

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To those who have given their lives for the preservation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and to my wife, Alice Anita, who has been a companion in my ministry and has faithfully served the Lord with me well past our golden wedding anniversary.

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Foreword

Benjamin Bar David Urshan is the son of David Urshan, who was a Presbyterian clergyman in Abajaloo, Azerbaijan, which is located in the northwest area of the nation of Iran. This nation was known as the nation of Persia in the early portion of the twentieth century. The area from which Reverend Benjamin Urshan came is an area where many Christians, both Assyrians and Armenians, lived. These precious, peace-loving people went through tragic massacres when at the start of World War I Moslems killed and butchered them by the thousands. Miraculously, Benjamin and his brothers, namely, Andrew David Urshan, Timothy David Urshan, and Joseph David Urshan, and other Christians, including the parents of the Urshan boys, were delivered.

When we use the name Benjamin Bar David Urshan, Bar means "son of." So the name actually means Benjamin, son of David Urshan. All of the boys have as their middle name the name of their father. This is one of the traditions of the Persian people that not only identifies who they are but also the name of their father and the family lineage.

The amazing story of this man's life that you will read is almost like an unbelievable tale. However, it is absolutely true in every respect. It brings to the reader a very remarkable story of the divine presence of the Lord through times of severe trouble.

The expansiveness of Reverend Benjamin Urshan's ministry saw him in the land of Russia during the revival held by his elder brother, Andrew David Urshan. It took him into England, to Canada, and finally into numerous

years of pastoring several churches in the United States of America. Reverend Urshan retired from pastoral leadership in the year 1983, in the city of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

When you read this book you will rejoice in the times of victory. You will weep when you read with pathos the sorrow that this precious man and his loved ones endured. He is the father of three children: Paul, David, and Joy. All of them are married and have made grandparents out of Brother Benjamin and his very loyal and sweet wife, Alice.

At this time Brother Urshan is a member of the Curriculum Committee of the United Pentecostal Church International, which sets the outlines for the Word Aflame Sunday school literature. In his retirement years he has been speaking in different parts of the nation as well as evangelizing in several churches. In spite of his eighty-four years he has been able to retain a very youthful look, and he and his wife, Alice, make a very lovely couple.

It is with a great deal of respect and love that I write this foreword about my dear uncle. He is a precious man. Birth and life in the Bible lands gives him a beautiful background of scriptural antiquity. To fellowship with him and his wife is a great delight. To hear his vast expressions of experience in the work of God is to hear an illustrious history of a pioneer preacher. He is the last of the Urshan brothers, of whom Andrew, Timothy, Joseph, Benjamin (Joseph's twin who died in infancy), and Josephus preceded him in death. We are thankful to God that Benjamin David Urshan is still with us to bring us an understanding of the good things of the Lord and to bless us with this book that you have in your possession. Read

it carefully. Open your heart to the Holy Spirit, and I am sure the history of this good man will be a great blessing to you.

Nathaniel A. Urshan

* * * * *

I met Benjamin Urshan when, at the age of seventeen, he committed his life to Christ in the Montreal assembly where his oldest brother, Andrew, pastored. For four years prior to his leaving Montreal to embark on this ministry, he and I enjoyed a warm personal relationship that has deepened with the passage of time. In 1926, it was my privilege to lead our young men in a weekly study of Finney's *Lectures on Revival*, promoting services of intercession and an outreach in street work. In these, Ben was outstanding in zeal and faithfulness.

In September 1926, Ben and I teamed up to expose a "wolf" who threatened to destroy the Montreal church. That scoundrel then moved to Picton and scandalized the church there. It was Ben who, by much effort and at great personal cost, reconstructed that assembly in 1928.

Like most young ministers, Ben learned in the "school of hard knocks." I recall an amusing incident. I was in Picton when Andrew was holding services for his brother. Ben was "enthusing" over the prospect of owning a dilapidated second-hand car. Suddenly, Andrew leaned across the dinner table to dampen Ben's ardor. "Buy a bicycle!"

he whispered. For a few months Ben owned the car, but when its joys encroached upon his prayer life and its woes soured his spirit, he wisely got rid of it.

I would be remiss if I did not pay tribute to the lady who has upheld and encouraged Ben for more than fifty years. Alice is one of God's noblewomen; her quiet outward grace enshrines a spirit of godliness and wisdom that has endeared her to all who have known her.

I recommend, for your pleasure and profit, the life story of Benjamin D. Urshan.

Your servant, for Jesus' sake,

John Paterson

Editor's Note: Benjamin Urshan passed away on October 21, 1998.

Preface

During the past sixty-two years of my ministry as evangelist, pastor, and missionary, I have been asked by pastors and those who have heard me preach in various churches as well as by my relatives of the third generation to put in writing some of my experiences of how God in His mercy helped me survive three massacres in the First World War of 1914-18.

Many of my relatives were not as fortunate as I was to survive the Islamic rage known as *jihad*, the so-called holy war. The expression "raka, raka" became familiar to the unfortunate Assyrian Christians during the three massacres. "Raka, raka" literally means, "Run for your life, run!"

The Assyrians are descendants of an ancient Mesopotamian empire described in the Old Testament. Unfortunately, this nation is disintegrated, humiliated, dispossessed of its homeland, and scattered over the face of the earth. Mesopotamia, or Bet-Nahrain, is known today as Iraq, which is now an Arab nation. Like the Jews, however, the Assyrians still maintain their identity, language, and culture, whether in America, Australia, the Middle East, or any other region.

Persia, the land of my birth and childhood, was renamed Iran in 1935. I will refer to it as Persia in those early years as it was then called.

My story is one about tears, trauma, struggles, loneliness, and love. It is also a story about how one young man found God and developed as a Pentecostal minister.

May God be glorified through the telling of my life story.

Benjamin David Urshan



Ben's parents in their day's Christian costume with twelve-year-old Andrew and one-year-old Timothy (1896).

Chapter 1

Childhood in Persia

I felt drained, as if someone had punched holes in my soles and everything emptied out. The twenty-two-day death march was over. Approximately one-third of the 150,000 Assyrian refugees whom the Turks, Kurds, and Moslems had driven from their homes died on the three-hundred-mile march. I had seen more than enough sickness and death on this march to last several lifetimes.

Now, my father, weakened from the nightmarish ordeal, grew weaker each day, his legs swelling until they were twice their normal size. Eventually he could not walk. One evening he laid his hands on me and prayed, "Lord, watch over my youngest boy and take good care of him. I am not able to provide for him."

The next morning my stepmother, Narigis, who also was in a weakened condition and nearly blind from the dust of the pulverized trails on the march, called me to help her bathe and feed my father. When we came to his bed, we found that my father had died in his sleep.

I stood in a daze, staring my unbelief at the still form of the man I loved more than anyone else in my life. Narigis closed his eyes. She began to weep. "What are we going to do, Benjamin? What are we going to do?"

I shook my head. "I didn't want him to die!" Hot salty tears began to penetrate my drained emotions—slowly at first, then crashing the floodgates.

Pulling herself together, Narigis said, "Get some water and soap, Benjamin. We must wash your father for burial. We can cry later."

I complied, but it was the most difficult thing I had ever done.

"I know that you are not quite twelve, Benjamin, and this is asking a lot of you, but I need your help," she said, trying hard to control her grief. She had been married to my father only two and one-half years, but this was long enough for her to learn to depend upon him. He always seemed to know just what to do—always in charge. But now he was gone. "Now, go find two Moslems who will bury your father."

We had no coffin in which to bury my father, so we wrapped him in a white bed sheet.

I found the two Moslems, and without any kind of funeral service, they carried my beloved father away for burial. One held his head and the other his feet. They dropped him on the way to the horse-drawn wagon where they put him with other bodies they picked up in Hamadan. My heart nearly broke. God in heaven only knows how and where he was buried.

Three of my brothers—Andrew, Josephus, and Joseph—were in the United States. My other brother, Timothy, was on the death march with us and survived it.

He had gotten a job with the British army as an interpreter. Somehow, we had lost touch with him. With so many refugees bulging Hamadan's population, losing one's relatives for a time was a common problem.

One day Narigis came to me. "Benjamin, as you well know, I am weak and nearly blind. I need someone to take care of me. Right now you are too young to help provide a living. I met some old friends whom I had helped several years ago. They told me that they would care for me until I recovered, but they did not want to be responsible for you. I feel that I must go with them.

"The rent for the room is paid for two more weeks. I'll leave you a little money. Surely the British allies or someone will help you." With this Narigis gave me a quick hug, turned, picked up, her few belongings, and walked out the door.

I felt so alone. I sat by the window and watched her disappear around the corner with her friends. I began to cry. Pent-up sobs poured from deep within me. I couldn't stop shaking. I fell across the bed, a thin pallet on the floor, and lay in a fetal position, sobbing like a young child. Exhausted, I fell asleep and must have slept a couple of hours.

The two weeks of rent were soon over as were the few coins I was given. I found myself out on the streets of a strange city. I had nothing but the clothes on my back and they were dirty. I roamed around searching for a familiar face but found none. I met other boys in similar situations who were around my age. Five of us slept on the street, huddled in doorways. We searched garbage containers for tidbits of food. I remember finding some melon rinds. As hungry as I was, these were a welcomed morsel.

After three or four days of roaming the streets, we came to the public square. Two British soldiers watched me and my orphan friends. We grew uncomfortable. Would they put us in prison, my befuddled mind wondered?

Using someone to interpret for them, a British soldier asked, "Would you boys like to go with us? We have a building set up to take care of homeless Assyrian children."

The boys and I exchanged glances. What did we have to lose? "Yes," I answered, "we will go."

When we entered the orphanage, I noticed about seventy-five children. The boys and girls had their heads shaved (some hair had grown out a little on some of them) and all of them had on white cotton robes. It was hard to tell the difference between the girls and the boys. I hated giving up my trousers and shirt, but the fresh clothing felt good. They burned our old clothes to get rid of any lice we might have had. Then they shaved our heads to further delouse us. I felt that I was losing my identity as big globs of my dark hair fell to the floor.

The orphanage was supervised by the British and managed by our own Assyrian people, mostly former ministers of the Orthodox and Presbyterian faiths whom the march had displaced. The orphanage had been a large adobe-brick home surrounded by a courtyard.

We mainly ate vegetable soup that had a touch of lamb in it. It was served with bread. We slept on pallets. The weather was still warm, so we didn't have cold weather to further complicate living conditions.

Every orphan in the place had his own recent sad story to tell—his own private nightmare. I could hear

some of the children crying at night as they lay on their pallets waiting for sleep to crowd out reality.

As I lay on my own mat, I found myself rehashing earlier, happier events of my life. I especially drew comfort from memories of my mother. How I could have used one of her warm hugs! Early memories of my wonderful father, whom I had just lost, my four brothers, a multitude of relatives, and our old home place caressed me, giving me a sense of identity and worth.

My Presbyterian minister father, David Bar Urshan, had been a well-respected and learned man who spoke and interpreted Turkish, Farsee, Aramaic, and even some Russian. I admired his gift for learning languages. He was also an advisor and notary public who made his services available to needy persons, and he ministered to several congregations in the vicinity of Abajaloo and Urmia.

My father was an excellent provider and my loving and hardworking mother, Nassimo, was a dedicated homemaker for her husband and five sons. Andrew was born in 1884 and was twenty-two years older than I. Next came Timothy, Josephus, and Joseph, whose twin, Benjamin, died. I came four years later. My parents named me after the twin who died. Two baby daughters were born but did not live. One was Susannah, born after Andrew. I don't recall the other sister's name. She must have died at birth.

My parents placed much value in giving their sons Bible names. "God will bless and preserve them," my father predicted.

My early childhood days were carefree. As I was the youngest child, not much was required of me. I don't remember being burdened with many chores. I did take

care of my father's cows. Some friends and I rode the horses as we took the cows to pasture and watched them. We especially enjoyed taking the cows to graze by the river. We spent many delightful summer hours swimming in the river until we were as wrinkled as figs.

In the midst of my pleasant young years, I had no premonition of the trauma my family and I would experience. God in His mercy spared me this terrible knowledge.

Four years before I was born, my brother Andrew left home and sailed to the United States of America to further his education. Andrew was only eighteen at the time, but being the oldest child, he matured early. Even so, eighteen was very young to be going so far away. This adventurous trip to the United States eventually brought many changes in our family.

I went to school and studied languages along with my regular subjects. In Persia we encountered people of many different languages, and it was important that we learn languages beyond our own tongue.

My cousin was my schoolteacher. She had forty pupils of varying ages in the class. Necessity demanded that she be a strict disciplinarian, and she was. Pupils who misbehaved had to hold out their hands and she whipped the upturned palms with a sapling.

Pupils sat on the floor with no desks on which to write. The classroom resembled the early Hebrew schools with strong emphasis on the Scriptures.

Our home was in the village of Abajaloo, thirteen miles from Urmia, where it is said that Abraham lived before making his much preached about journey of faith. A beautiful brook flowed in front of our home and the

house was surrounded by vineyards that offered seven varieties of grapes. There were stately aspens that turned a magnificent gold in the fall. Our home was made of regular baked bricks and adobe bricks. My father had the adobe bricks made. Stucco was added to the adobe to strengthen them. Adobe was an especially good building material that insulated against extremes in weather, of which we had a wide variety.

Our home was built in the shape of a courtyard. It had a main entrance and a gate. We had our stable; then came the courtyard with rooms built around it somewhat like a motel. The first part of the house had two stories.

We had our very large upstairs family room with an open-beam ceiling. At one time, before Andrew left for America, he taught a big class in this room. Our bedrooms encircled the courtyard and opened into the center.

My father had every room carpeted with beautiful Persian carpets. He often made trips to other cities and found interesting rug patterns and rich colors. A carpet with two hundred knots or ties per square inch, if not abused, could last a long lifetime.

We slept right on the carpeted floors. We did not have bed frames with springs and mattresses such as the Western world has. At night we unrolled our sleeping carpets like a thinly rolled mattress. Carpets were swept with a broom and sometimes taken outside and beaten to clean them.

On warm evenings we often slept on the flat rooftop with a clear, starry sky for a blanket. It was not unusual to see shooting stars.

There was a well in one corner of the courtyard built up with brick about a foot high. It had a wooden cover.

We drew water with a rope attached to a bucket.

My father was a praying man. I will always remember him in our courtyard when the sun was setting. On hot days he took water and sprinkled the stones to cool them and to settle the dust. It smelled like a summer shower. Then Father spread his prayer rug in the courtyard and knelt to pray. I can still see him in the rosy glow of the evening, his locks of hair swaying back and forth as he prayed.

I'd walk in and see him praying and quietly go into one of the rooms, get some raisins and nuts, and leave him to his devotions.

Father would get up around six in the morning and make tea. He was always first to arise. Like Daniel of old, my father usually prayed in the morning, in the afternoon, and again in the evening. I loved and respected my father. He was a good man who taught us to be responsible, respectful, and honest. He provided well for his family, making money from crops and from services he rendered in addition to his ministering to several churches.

Breakfast at our house usually consisted of homemade yogurt and jam made from grapes, which my mother made a little heavier than syrup. Then there was my mother's bread and sometimes we had eggs.

Lunch consisted of bread, cheese, and tea. We never drank Turkish coffee except at weddings or funerals.

My mother, Nassimo, was a good cook and homemaker. She made a big "pillow" of *lawash* (bread) every other day. I can still see my rather sturdily built mother, her dark hair under a scarf around her head at all times, as she slapped, punched, and spread the bread dough

thin, then baked it in a hot charcoal-fed oven. The bread was crunchy.

For the evening meal my mother cooked potatoes and fresh vegetables such as greens or carrots. She prepared lettuce and tomatoes to go with summer meals. Sometimes we had meat, although it was not the rule.

At our house the table was very low and we sat on thin pillows on the floor.

We grew our own grapes, vegetables, wheat, and barley. My father took the wheat to the mill and had it ground into flour. We stored it in large bins and had all we needed until the next season. Occasionally we butchered a cow, and my mother salted and preserved it.

There were slabs of stone and sidewalks in our courtyard. In the middle, my father grew a nice vegetable garden. It was handy to water, interesting to watch things grow, and available when we needed food—as well as adding beauty to the courtyard. It was also protected from small animals feasting on it or big animals trampling it.

When I was only seven years old, I went with my father to his various congregations and helped start the singing. There were no organs or pianos in these churches, and I seemed to have the ability to start songs on the right pitch.

When Sunday came, we often heard our mother reminding us, "Now, you can take a short walk, but don't go too far. Don't play or throw sticks or stones." She encouraged the Old Testament Sabbath rules. My mother cooked the Sunday food on Saturday.

On Sundays we had church mostly in the morning. We seldom had night meetings. Perhaps the lack of good transportation discouraged night services.

I remember celebrating several holidays: Christmas, the Persian New Year (in April), Easter, and the Ascension of Christ.

Christmas was celebrated with family gatherings and feasting. We seldom exchanged gifts. The celebration consisted mostly of cooking special dishes, banqueting, having fellowship, singing, and worshiping.

We celebrated Easter with colored eggs. We did not hide Easter eggs—just ate them and exchanged some. Some of the boys used to "gamble" with eggs. If your hard-boiled egg could crack someone else's egg, his egg was yours.

We celebrated the Ascension by gathering by the river with friends and relatives, eating, and cultural dancing. In one of the dances, people danced in a circle with the beat of a drum and music from a flutelike instrument. They would embrace and lift their little fingers up. Later we sat on rugs by the river and ate and drank tea.

Although we did not realize it at the time, our traditional Persian family was soon to undergo a metamorphosis that would drastically affect every member of our family.

Chapter 2

Exposed to Pentecost

My brother Andrew had been in the United States several years when one of the Assyrian boys in Chicago wrote to his relatives in Persia, "Andrew is affected by this new religion!" The letter went on to describe the unusual ways this group worshiped. Soon word came to my father.

"Andrew went to America to get an education, not to get involved with some fanatical religious group," Father said.

My father called Timothy in one day. "Timothy, I want you to go to check on Andrew and see if you can straighten him out. He's gotten mixed up in some strange religion."

So Timothy sailed to America. Upon his arrival, Timothy was met and greeted by several of the Assyrian men of whom Andrew was now the leader. These young men were bubbling over with love and the joy of the Holy Ghost. In their regular service that same evening,

Timothy was ushered into a wonderful atmosphere of praise and worship.

Instead of "straightening Andrew out," Timothy could not resist the love and joy of these dedicated young men and their newfound salvation. In no time Timothy was overwhelmed by the Spirit and power of God and he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost in Chicago.

When news of Timothy's conversion reached our parents, they were greatly disturbed. Upon learning of our parents' deep concern for them, Andrew and Timothy decided to return to their homeland. Andrew had been away twelve years and was eager to share his newfound faith.

Usually when native sons return to their homeland, they are joyfully met, embraced, and welcomed as successful sons who have done well abroad. But the false reports about the new religion caused people to shun Andrew and Timothy. Furthermore, these two Urshan boys (especially Andrew, who had been into this religion longer) were the cause of indoctrinating other young Assyrian men in America.

It was March 1914. Spring was emerging from the bitter winter. Northern Persia, with its bubbling springs, rivers fed from mountain snow, and tender green vegetation covering signs of winter like a soft mantle, made winter slink into its cave for another year.

Andrew drank in the beauty and basked in the warm sunshine, thousands of boyhood memories flooding his mind.

But bigger thoughts crowded in. How would his parents respond to his "fresh spring" spiritual experience of the infilling of the Holy Ghost? Andrew and Timothy

spent time in fasting and praying. God would have to condition hearts; his task: was to present the message.

Andrew announced that he would like to meet the people to explain his new experience. After all, it was only fair that they should hear his side of the story and not blindly accept hearsay.

The meeting took place in the town of Ada. A large number of people from all walks of life came with much curiosity to hear what Andrew had to say.

As I remember the occasion, Andrew opened this service by simply singing Psalm 51 under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This psalm in the Aramaic language is a song of repentance and confession of sins.

As Andrew sang, the convicting power of God caused the people to see their need of God. A spirit of weeping and repenting came upon the people, from the very young to the old.

Andrew did nothing more; he simply withdrew himself from the people, leaving the results to God.

This was the beginning of the move of God in Iran. In six months' time, as Andrew and workers who wanted to accompany him preached in towns and villages around the city of Urmia, God poured out His Spirit upon hundreds of openhearted people.

In spite of the opposition and persecution from various religious groups, the revival fires continued to engulf people from many walks of life.

As a young boy, I was an eyewitness to the mighty power of God and watched God use my brother in marvelous ways.

The Assyrian people were naturally reserved people, but formality was swept away when God's Spirit fell upon

them. Men, women, young, and old were swayed by God's power with demonstrations of shaking and tongues of fire that I have not seen since.

The very atmosphere was charged by the power of God. Even children my age felt this supernatural power. We went into the fields and vineyards in groups, kneeling down with hands uplifted. We sang the songs Andrew taught us: "This World Is Not My Home" and "Under the Blood, the Precious Blood." Although I did not receive the Holy Ghost at that time, for the first time I received a touch of God on my life.

Andrew translated these songs and many other American songs into our language. Those who know the difficulty of translating a song from one language to another cannot help but admire the wisdom and ability God gave my brother.

The village of Abajaloo where we lived became for a short time a center of miracles. Our mother received a beautiful infilling of the Spirit, and though she was already a minister's wife and helped people, she dedicated her life in a deeper way to bless others.

My father resigned from the Presbyterian Church after five of his family received the Holy Ghost. He did not openly oppose Andrew, nor did he openly accept the message of Pentecost. I felt that my father may have believed but did not become a part of it. He was present when my mother received her beautiful experience. Surely he felt God's power. He did not react negatively but just sat quietly.

Mother was one of the first ones to receive the Holy Ghost when Andrew returned home. When people came from the villages to listen to Andrew, she cooked caul-

drons of stew and other food to feed them.

When questioned as to whether she was going overboard in extending hospitality to so many people, she replied, "These people have come a long distance to hear about the Holy Ghost, and there are no restaurants, so I must feed them."

Joseph, who was nearly twelve, received the Holy Ghost in an afternoon revival meeting when Andrew laid his hands on him and prayed. He received a remarkable anointing of the Spirit.

One day Joseph noticed the neighbor's rooster giving our rooster a bad beating. With a sudden impulse he grabbed the aggressive one by the neck, gave it a whirl, and threw it to the ground. The rooster flopped weakly and looked as if it might die.

Realizing what he had impulsively done and what the consequences might be since he was a Christian and the neighbor a Moslem, Joseph got on his knees and prayed, crying out to God to heal the rooster and save him the embarrassment of facing the neighbor. God answered his prayer. The rooster flapped his wings, struggled to his feet, and walked away. Joseph wiped the perspiration from his brow. "Thank You, Lord!" he said fervently. As touchy as the political scene was, an incident such as this one might trigger a war!

Andrew preached in several towns in northern Persia where there were about sixty thousand Nestorians divided into Catholics, Presbyterians, and a few Plymouth Brethren along with some who still embraced the original Nestorian Christian faith. Around seven hundred of these people were baptized with the Holy Ghost. From Ada, Abajaloo, Karajaloo, Shirrabad, and Gogtopa the revival

spread. Two hundred people were filled with the Spirit at Gogtopa.

Persia was a war-ridden country with drained military forces. It had been the brunt of attacks for many years and for several reasons: political, commercial, and now religious.

While Andrew was in a revival in Gogtopa news came that the Turks and Kurds, having heard that our neighboring allies, the Russians, who had encamped in northern Persia, had withdrawn to their own country. This left our area wide open to a Turk-Kurd-Moslem attack.

Chapter 3

The First Massacre

In 1914 when World War I broke out, the Assyrian people aligned themselves with the British, American, and Russian Allies. The Turks were in central power at that time.

When the war came, the Russian army began a tug-of-war with the Turks with Persia in the middle. The Moslems then declared a "holy war" to wipe out Christianity. Mohammed, many years past, had told his followers that Allah wished them to spread Islam all over the world, by peaceful means if possible, by force if necessary.

Because we were not militarily strong and depended upon our allies, the Turks thought us to be traitors. The Turks would have massacred the Christians at once, but they feared the return of the Russian troops and having to answer for their actions. So a meeting of city officials and Moslem clergy was held, and they voted unanimously that every Christian must be destroyed at once. They decided to send for the Kurds, who were noted for their

lawlessness and plundering and who lived in the nearby mountains, and ask them to help do the dirty work. They offered them the Christian inhabitants as a gift, to do with as they chose; the plunder would also be attractive to them.

At this time the Germans controlled the Turks and the Turks controlled the Kurds—a people without a country or government who lived mostly in regions between Turkey, Persia, and Iraq.

Andrew and those with him decided to leave Gogtopa and head for Urmia where they could find refuge in the American Presbyterian missionary compound. Amid cannon blasts, bullets flying, bloody massacres with the dead lying in the street, and burning houses, they climbed over walls, waded through rocky streams, crossed vineyards, trudged over hills and down valleys until they finally reached the ancient, patched-up walls of Urmia, a city with a population of 100,000 and more than four miles in circumference. It was surrounded by many towns and was a metropolis where a continuous procession of camels, donkeys, mules, horses, and pedestrians flowed. People and animals alike were loaded with merchandise of every description. The bazaars were crowded with buyers and sellers.

An American flag greeted them at the city walls. The enemies, even in their depraved condition, recognized that this area was protected by allies and backed off.

In my home village of Abajaloo, my father gathered his family together as well as some Christian neighbors. "Let's pray that God will watch over and protect us and that He will show us the way to escape," my father said. Though he tried to appear calm, we could see the tension

in his face and heard the earnestness in his prayer. These were fearsome hours. There were no halfhearted, mechanical prayers that night.

Having received word that the Kurds were on their way, two days before they arrived my father took all of our Persian rugs and other valuables, cut holes in the ceiling, hid the rugs in the attic space, and replastered the holes. He buried most of our silver and gold in the yard, taking only a part of it with us.

Sitting on a powder keg that night, we were frightened when the door suddenly flew open and a naked neighbor woman burst into the room! My mother grabbed her shawl, threw it around the woman's battered body, and tried to comfort her.

"They skinned my husband alive before my eyes!" she sobbed. "They brutally raped me and threw me into the river, thinking I was dead." She wept and trembled in my mother's arms. Mother helped clean her up and found clothes for her. We prayed with her.

A neighbor man had been doused with fuel and set on fire. We saw him writhing on the ground. I will never forget the screams.

An Orthodox priest was taken up to the steeple and was told, "If you don't deny Christ, we'll throw you down!"

The priest refused to deny Jesus so his captors changed their minds, took him back down, tied him to a horse, and dragged him through the streets of the city until he died.

We were frightened all the time. It was awful to live constantly under the threat of death—not knowing when or how we would be killed.

We saw the dead lying in the streets with dogs eating on them. Buzzards sailed and darted overhead. These horrible mental images are etched deeply in my memory.

Why were these people killing the Christians, hunting them down like wild animals? We hadn't done anything against them. My young mind groped for an answer, but none came.

Our family had Moslem neighbors who were very good friends despite our differences in religion. My father took his family by night and escaped to this neighbor's home, feeling that we would be safe from Moslem-Turk-Kurd attacks.

After three days the Moslem man said, "I can't take care of you anymore. The invaders will think I am a friend to Christians and therefore a traitor, and I will be killed."

Not wanting to endanger a friend, the six of us—our parents, Timothy, Josephus, Joseph, and I—left the neighbor's house and hid all day long in a six-by-eight-foot toilet. We huddled in fear, hoping no one would discover us. We stayed in a stable a few nights. The November nights were turning cold and it was difficult to stay warm. We hid in the hay.

The missionary compound was thirteen miles away. How could we bypass the roving bands of soldiers and angry Moslems?

My father spotted two Moslems whom he knew well. They were armed with guns on their shoulders. My father hollered to them, "My family needs protection to get to the church!"

The men agreed to escort us to the church in Abajaloo, where we joined two hundred people crowded into the Presbyterian church.

When the Turks and Moslems saw that over two hundred people were in their hands, they gathered branches and straw and stacked them around the church. "We'll burn them! A whole church full of them in one blow!" they schemed.

Those inside the church could look out the windows and see what was happening. They were surrounded. It was frightening. Earnest prayers bombarded God's throne. Just before the straw was ignited, American missionaries came riding up on their horses carrying the American flag. They had gotten word of this plot and came to the rescue. They immediately demanded that the Turks withdraw from the entrance of the church, and surprisingly, the Turks obeyed.

The refugees were jubilant for this miraculous rescue. The women grabbed the hands and feet of the missionaries, kissed them, and thanked God for them. The two hundred or more refugees, led by Dr. Shedd and his coworkers, the American flag waving in the breeze, marched to Urmia to take further refuge in the American compound.

On the way, the people were met by bands of Kurds who had joined in the destruction of the Christians, but when they saw the Stars and Stripes and the Americans riding confidently on their horses, they did not fire a shot.

Thus we arrived safely in Urmia, where we were crowded into the compound. We later discovered that the city had nineteen flags placed on the walls and gate.

The missionary facility covered several acres and was about the size of a large city square. There were a good number of buildings that the missionaries had been using as a dispensary, chapels, and rooms for education. Every

available space was crowded with around twenty-five thousand refugees. The wall around the compound was twenty feet high and three feet thick. There were two good wells to supply the water but no sewer, hence very poor sanitation. With so many occupants, this posed a problem.

An estimated seventy thousand Assyrians were driven from their homes at this time. Of this number, only the twenty-five thousand survivors at the compound were accounted for when it was over. Some may have accompanied the Russians as they retreated into their land. Few if any census records of the population in Persia were kept at that time, so we couldn't get an accurate count. It was a terrible slaughter and a shameful waste of human lives.

We got in touch with Andrew who had arrived safely from Gogtopa. Knowing Andrew, I am sure that he found many opportunities to share his faith during those dark days.

Since our Uncle Badal had a very good piece of property opposite the compound that contained several large rooms, he agreed to allow our family to move into his home.

Andrew, now an American citizen, asked our mother, my aunt, and other women in the home to make a large American flag to hang outside of Uncle Badal's home for our protection.

During the six months of the siege, we were protected as long as we stayed inside. We were reminded of the Israelites on the Passover night who were protected from the destroying angel by the blood on the door.

My uncle, a well-to-do citizen of Urmia, kept in contact with his Moslem friends outside, as well as what was

taking place across the street at the compound.

Secretly at night, provisions were brought in to keep us alive. On such an occasion, while Uncle Badal was transferring food for us, the Turkish sentries spotted him, kidnapped him, and held him prisoner.

Every effort through the officials and the American missionaries to free Uncle Badal was of no avail. The Turks demanded a ransom in silver and gold for his safe release. Those were days of anxiety for all of us, especially Uncle Badal.

Time was running out. The ransom money had to be secured quickly. My father, remembering that he had buried most of our family's money prior to leaving our home, offered to pay the ransom, providing he would be guaranteed a safe trip there and back.

A Turkish officer secured a guard to accompany my father back to our home where he would dig up the money. It was risky. Whom could he trust? Would they take the money and kill both my father and Uncle Badal if some evil whim came over them? Were they playing tricks?

Whatever the outcome, my father had no alternative. He had to help Uncle Badal.

The money was secured, my father returned to us unharmed, and Uncle Badal was released. God in His mercy helped us out of this dilemma and also helped to supply our needs during the nearly six months of our confinement.

Because of the crowded conditions in the compound, typhus broke out. This infectious disease, caused by a germ carried by the rat flea and the body louse, often crops up when living conditions are crowded and dirty.

Symptoms included pain in the head, back, and limbs

and fever that rose to 104 or 105 degrees. After a few days, rose-colored spots broke out all over the body. High fever often lasted ten to fourteen days. During this time the patient was in danger of falling into a coma and dying. Those who survived it often had to learn to walk all over again.

Many of the people in the compound took typhus and scores of them died. From the roof of Uncle Badal's house we could see the dead bodies taken from the compound and stacked like cord wood upon the carts. They were taken outside the city, we were told, and buried—some in mass graves. Each day of the epidemic, from fifty to one hundred people died.

The world knows little of the deep sorrow and suffering of the poor victims of these massacres. Historians do not write much about them.

Our mother was so devoted to the needs of the refugees that she would deprive us, at times, to feed and care for the sick and suffering. She ignored my father's warning and risked her life to take care of typhus victims.

One day Andrew contracted the dreaded typhus. When he sensed he was dying, he heard a great number of people praying, but he could not see them. After this unusual spiritual experience he immediately reached a turning point, and he soon recovered and grew well and strong. Later he learned that friends in England and America interceded in prayer on his behalf at that crucial time.

One day Mother was stricken with typhus and diphtheria. One disease was enough to kill a person in those days with the limited medical attention given. Being the youngest of the family and very attached to my mother, I

was constantly with her as she grew weaker and weaker on her deathbed.

Trying to ease her discomfort, I brought cool water to her throughout the day and a wet cloth to cool her fevered face. But despite our caring for her and the earnest prayers that encircled the throne on her behalf, one morning she slipped away to be with Jesus.

My father and brothers begged the Turkish government to give them protection while we gave our mother an honorable burial in a Christian cemetery, and this request was granted. My heart nearly broke when I saw my mother being taken away. I was not permitted to go to the burial. The aching sadness and deep loneliness was almost too much for a nine-year-old boy to bear. This sorrow heaped upon the other disappointments and fearful situations we had faced seemed like the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back.

We all grieved. The one woman in our family was gone. There was no way of realizing how much we would miss her in the months ahead.

But through it all, our immediate family was fortunate in escaping and finding refuge in Urmia under the American flag. This was not the case with some of our relatives. My cousin, George Badal, related the sad account of how a bloodthirsty Kurd opened fire on his young sister and ripped open her abdomen. Her father, who begged for her life to no avail, saw what happened. He fell upon her body and died with a heart attack.

Another daughter, to escape rape by these cruel tormentors, threw herself in a well. Fortunately she survived and was later rescued.

While we waited for Russian troops to come back and

drive the enemies out of our country, one day about twenty thousand Turkish soldiers with eight thousand animals marched through our area carrying food, ammunition, and baggage.

"Where are they going?" I wanted to know.

"They are headed for Russia, Benjamin," my father replied. "It seems they have decided to fight against the Russians in their own country."

Soon troops of Kurds joined the Turks, numbering about the same as the Turks. They marched by Urmia and on to Salmas where they battled the Russians near Dilman. The Turks were defeated and then retreated back to their own land.

We were exhilarated when we heard that the Russians had driven the Turks one hundred miles into Turkey. We heard that most of the forty thousand Turks and Kurds were killed in the battle.

We still did not know what was happening. Tidbits of news filtered through: the Russians were fifteen miles away and were coming to liberate us; the Russians were ten miles away. . . . Finally, one morning a bearer of good news came. "The Russians will be here by two o'clock today!"

There was no way to describe the welcome the Russian soldiers received. People poured out of the compound. Many had been prosperous, living in beautiful homes, and many women had worn silk. Now everyone was on the same level—poor, clad in the filthiest rags, the marks of hunger and suffering etched deeply on their thin faces.

As the blue-eyed Cossacks rode their horses through the gates of Urmia, some of the people prostrated themselves on the ground and kissed the horses' hooves. Then

they arose and kissed the boots of the riders until the boots were streaked with tears. Over and over they asked, "Why didn't you come sooner?" Others expressed their joy by throwing their hats in the air and hollering.

When the soldiers saw the pitiful sight of the refugees and their jubilation over being freed, their own eyes filled with tears. They opened bags and boxes of their own food and gave their last crusts of bread. They also opened their pocketbooks and gave their last coins. May 2, 1915, was a day to be remembered.

It was time to return to our home. We had no idea what we would find.

Chapter 4

The Flight to Russia

When some people returned to their village, they found neither homes nor village—only smoldering and blackened ruins. We were more fortunate than most of them.

We gathered our few belongings together, expressed our gratitude for hospitality shown us, said goodbye to our relatives and headed to our home in Abajaloo, not knowing what we would find.

My father had seen our home when he went to dig up the money for Uncle Badal's ransom, but some time had elapsed and perhaps the house had been further vandalized.

I felt a sadness leaving the place where my mother was buried. It seemed that I was leaving a part of me in Urmia.

As our house came into view, I felt a smile stretch across my face. "Look!" I exclaimed. "Our home is still standing!"

Our home had been ravaged but had not been destroyed by fire. In searching for hidden valuables possibly concealed in walls and attics, marauders had viciously gouged and slashed the walls, knocking big holes in the plaster. All the hidden Persian carpets were gone, as were the animals, food, clothing, and everything else of any worth.

Debris was strewn everywhere. Possibly some of the Kurds had slept in our house. In the six months we were away, anything could have happened.

"I was hoping that some of our animals would be left," I told my father.

"I'm sorry, Benjamin. I, too, wish they were here. But we are fortunate that our house is still here—even in the poor condition it is in. We can thank God for that blessing."

When the Kurds came to strip households of their goods to take them to their mountain homesteads, there was so much bulk to cart off and animals to control that they sold items and animals at ridiculously low prices just to be rid of the burden and to have a few coins in their pockets. Persian sheep were sold for as little as five cents each, cows for forty cents, expensive Persian rugs for five dollars apiece.

It was told that two Kurds saw a yellow metal padlock on a door and quarreled over it. The dispute ended in a duel with the men fighting to their deaths over a mere trifle.

My father organized the cleanup procedure at our home. He and his five boys, plus any neighbor who was able to help, pitched in and cleaned up the rubble, restoring things as much as possible.

It was good to be home again. Our vineyards yielded grapes and neighboring women made grape jam for us. Back in our own home again, we were constantly aware of our mother's absence—her cooking, cleaning, mending, and the other thousands of little things she did in taking care of the "men" in her family. In the following months we were able to raise some grain for our own use and some to sell. It seemed as though a touch of normalcy began to creep back into our lives.

Not long afterward, the Russian army pulled out again and the second massacre began.

Our family was better prepared this time. My father and brothers managed to get help from the straggling Russian units, so we headed for Russia, arriving safely in Tiflis in the province of Georgia. Somehow we managed to survive that subzero winter of 1915-16.

Andrew got in touch with the Christians in America, and help arrived to sustain us for the most of our stay. Andrew began his ministry among the Russians during those bleak winter months.

The Holy Ghost message Andrew preached met with great success among the spiritually hungry Russians. God blessed his ministry and around 180 people were baptized and received the Holy Ghost.

I witnessed baptismal services in which ice had to be chopped in the river before eighty people could wade out into the water. God had given these believers the scriptural revelation of baptism in Jesus' name according to Acts 2:38, and they asked Andrew to use this formula in baptism. While there was some controversy about baptismal formulas among Christians in America, over in Russia the Holy Spirit had already illuminated the truth of

God's Word to many of these people.

After one of the baptismal services, two men asked, "Brother Andrew, have you been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus according to Acts 2:38?"

"No, I was baptized according to Matthew 28:19 when I was in America with the Assemblies of God," Andrew said. "Brethren, let us not make an issue of this and divide the church as the brethren are doing in America. Why don't we pray about the matter?"

After prayer, a spokesman for the Russian brethren said, "Brother Andrew, as our leader, we feel that you should set an example and be baptized in Jesus' name as they were baptized in the early church in the Book of Acts."

Already knowing in his heart that he should walk in the light God had shone on his path, Andrew was baptized in Jesus' name. Seeing him rebaptized, seventy-five other people waded into the icy waters and were rebaptized. "Although we stayed in the water about two hours with so many being baptized, none of us got colds or became sick because of it," Andrew said.

During our stay in Russia in the winter of early 1916, we witnessed riots that eventually led to the overthrow of the czarist monarchy. The land was in great turmoil. There was little order, and we suffered from a desperate shortage of food. There were times when we had to beg for bread to keep us from starving.

While in Russia, I was stricken with a severe case of smallpox. My father did not seek medical help for me, fearing that as a lonely young boy away from my homeland, I might be confined in isolation and die from the trauma.

Many people died from the disease, which was char-

acterized by fever, aches, pains throughout the body, and rash that turned into sores which often left pitted scars on the face. Many people were left blinded by the disease.

My father kept me in my room and took care of me, functioning in a dual role of father and mother. It took several months for me to regain my health. God in His mercy spared me from permanent aftereffects.

As the revolution became more unbearable, my brother Andrew arranged to leave for the United States, taking with him our two brothers, Joseph and Josephus. He also took three cousins, Jonathan, Abraham, and Absalom.

Andrew went to England by way of Germany, where he left our brother Joseph, who was about fifteen at the time, in Dr. Pair's home. Joseph attended the Episcopal Academy for three years to prepare himself for coming to the United States. He later joined Andrew in Chicago.

Andrew and the boys left Liverpool on June 18, 1916, by steamship and arrived seven days later in New York.

My father, Timothy, and I returned to our homeland. The Moslems had robbed us of everything of value while we were away. But things seemed to have settled down for a while, and we tried to pick up the pieces and get on with life as best as we could.

After a time my father met a fine Christian woman named Narigis who was several years younger than he, and they married.

I enjoyed having a woman in the home who cooked and took care of us, but I had a problem sharing my father with her. The memory of my mother still fresh in my mind made it difficult for me as I saw Narigis functioning in my mother's role.

Timothy married Anna soon after my father remarried. Their first child was a little girl whom they named Mary. They moved in with us, and I enjoyed having them. Timothy continued his mission work in Urmia.

We all missed Andrew, Joseph, and Josephus. It seemed that the size of our family was constantly changing. In late 1917 we received word that Andrew had gotten married to Mildred Hammergren.

Chapter 5

Twenty-Two-Day Death March

In late June of 1918, word came to us that the British army had entered Persia, landing in the south and working its way north. This was good news to the Christians. There was hope of being rescued from another brutal attack from our old enemies, the Moslems, Kurds, and Turks. The British were at Hamadan, about three hundred miles from Urmia.

My father, fearing that the British would not reach us in time, took precaution and prepared for another flight. He secured seven donkeys and fed them well so they could carry the food and water stored up in pots and goatskins for our trip. Thin crisp loaves of bread were prepared for the trip as was cheese wrapped in cloth, raisins, figs, and pistachio nuts.

On that fateful day of July 1, 1918, the Kurds came down from the mountains. The Turks and Moslems also

were around to plunder and kill once again. This is when our exodus, the most horrible twenty-two days of our lives, began.

At daybreak the streets and roads were clogged with people. Some rode on horses, some on donkeys. Others rode on wagons or pushed carts, but most were on foot. Many of the travelers had little or no warning and carried little more than what they wore. All of us were running for our lives.

The cry of the aged, not able to flee, and of children separated from their parents in the rush was heartrending as we rushed out of the cities and headed toward the mountains.

Looking back, we could see columns of billowing black smoke of our burning homes. Sodom must have looked like this.

Summer with its sweltering 110 to 115 degrees was upon us. The pulverized dirt roads and bypaths billowed in our faces. Dust stung our eyes and choked us. Rivulets of muddy perspiration streaked our faces as 150,000 people and many animals hurried on their way. Women pulled their chadors over their faces with only their eyes showing. New refugees joined us as we passed near their villages.

The first day we traveled well into the night before stopping for a couple of hours for quick snatches of sleep. My father let me ride on one of our donkeys for a little while, but I kept going to sleep and falling off. We covered about fifteen miles that first day.

At intervals Moslems would open fire on the motley throng and many of the travelers were killed. Scarcity of water soon became a problem and many animals died. At

night we tried to keep our animals close to us. We even tied ourselves to them so they would not wander away in the darkness. Four of our donkeys died on the first three or four days of the march and were left for the vultures to devour.

Our food supply, ample for a very long march, dwindled quickly. How could one eat around starving people without sharing?

Our shoes were torn by the rocks and worn by days of hard walking, and we traveled barefoot on the burning sand, gravel, and rocks the last days of the march. The blinding sun and the thick dust irritated our eyes until we could scarcely see. Some of us put sacks over our heads and looked out at the bottom just enough to see our feet. This helped some.

The procession was so long that it took three days for it to pass by. The bleating of sheep, neighing of horses, braying of donkeys, crying of tired, hungry and sick children, wailing of women who had lost loved ones and had to leave them in shallow graves on the way, frustration of men unable to care for their families, trampling on one another's heels in a seemingly endless march of humanity, often going day and night without rest—all etched indelible impressions in our minds.

Diseases of many descriptions raged among the refugees. One miserable day piled upon another and called for strength that could only have come from God.

Many of the elderly died early in the march and were buried in the sand. I saw my father with tears in his eyes many times as he said a last prayer over many of those who died. Several of our relatives died on the march.

Babies were born by the side of the road near people

who buried their dead, as life's rhythms methodically continued.

While walking along with a cousin—of whom we had many, claiming those even several times removed—I moved away from my parents, and before I realized it, I was lost. It was much easier getting lost than it was getting found. I spent the night away from my folks. I tried to act grown up about it, but deep inside my not-quite-twelve-year-old heart panic was brewing. After all the horrible things I had seen on the march, I knew that bad things could happen to any of us. The next morning I caught sight of my folks and was very relieved to travel close to them again.

People who carted silver utensils, quilts, carpets, and valuable articles in their wagons eventually had to leave these valuable possessions by the side of the road when their animals died. Personal survival became their only goal.

Only once did we come to a village where we could buy lamb and sheep and our people had meat to eat. It was wonderful.

We were without water many times and the dreadful heat added to our dehydration. Many people died from thirst. I was so thirsty at one time that I remember telling my father, "If I could just get a drink of water and have some bread, I'd be willing to lay down and die." I'd have been more than glad to trade my entire future for it. The hunger was bad but the thirst was far worse.

When we did come to a well, some became so crazed to get a drink that they literally threw themselves into the well and had to be pulled out. I saw people lick damp places on the ground trying to get some moisture.

After twenty traumatic days we came to Siangala. We

were assured that we could take a much needed rest. There was water and shade trees.

"Benjamin, bring us some water from the spring," my father said. He was not yet sixty, but he looked old and sick. My stepmother was nearly blind from the dust and infection from flies and had to be guided along.

I took a good sized goat-skin water pouch and headed for the spring. Suddenly bullets whistled through the trees and one whizzed past me. The Moslems opened fire on us. After all I had survived the past twenty days, was I going to be killed by a Moslem's bullet? My heart pounded in my throat and my feet sprouted wings as I darted back to my folks. We would get water later.

We resumed our march and after two more days we reached Hamadan, where the British army was camped.

Those who reached Hamadan were a frightful sight—clothes torn into shreds, bare feet swollen and bleeding, hunger and thirst having reduced their bodies to mere skeletons. Many were disoriented from losing family members and all their worldly possessions.

Only one of our donkeys was left, and Timothy traded the pitiful creature for a loaf of bread for his ailing two-year-old daughter. Two days later little Mary died and was buried in Hamadan.

We walked three hundred miles in those twenty-two days, averaging about thirteen miles per day. Those twenty-two days were awful days filled with more emotional trauma than most people experience in a long lifetime. But now we were in Hamadan, and the British soldiers were scattered all over town doing their best to help the nearly 100,000 refugees who survived to find food and shelter.

Jammed as it was in Hamadan, there was a feeling of safety—of someone caring what happened to us—although the threats of uprising had not entirely disappeared.

Timothy told my father one day, "I've been given a job with the British as an interpreter and supervisor in helping separated families reunite."

My father smiled. "I'm glad. Having learned some English will be a great advantage to you."

Some of the refugees wrote their relatives in Europe and America and received help to meet some of their needs, but most of us were at the mercy of our British benefactors.

In a few days the British told Timothy to help gather refugees and head for Iraq to be safer. A city of tents had been established in Bakuba near Baghdad to provide rations for thousands of Assyrian refugees.

Timothy wanted my father, stepmother, and me to go along with him and Anna to the camp.

"I will need some time to recover from the march," my father said. "It's a long way to Iraq and I am not well enough to make it."

Besides my father's health, my stepmother balked at joining Timothy and Anna in the camp. Her attitude displeased my father and for a time brought bad feelings between them. Although my father could not go because of his health, he did not want a rift that involved Timothy. Timothy had no alternative but to leave. He had a job to do.

For several days we lived like vagabonds, living in barns, sheds, or anywhere we could find shelter. We managed to make ourselves beds of straw and hay, but soon

we were ordered to leave these small comforts.

With a few coins he had left and with the help of some of our relatives who had been on the march with us, my father was able to rent a room in the caravansary (inn). It was a building with a stable in the main courtyard and rooms over the animals.

Our cousin Samuel, who lost his wife and child on the march, occupied the room next to ours. Understandably, Samuel was in a deeply depressed condition. Even though my parents were ill themselves, they tried to encourage Samuel.

I was the only one who could get around to help, so I bought bread and cheese from the Moslems and made tea for our breakfasts.

My father suffered greatly with pains in his body, which may have been dropsy or perhaps even blood clots in his legs that caused them to swell. We had no medical help to give a diagnosis.

One morning my father said, "Benjamin, take this money and go to the bazaar. Get me some opium. I can hardly bear this pain in my body." In those days opium could be purchased in most stores—even by a twelve-year-old boy. Opium came in the size of a pencil about three or four inches long.

I would break off a very small piece and put it in my father's tea. This relieved his pain for a while. I did this every morning for Samuel too.

One morning Samuel said, "Benjamin, I need a larger portion of the opium."

"No, I can't give you more. Father said to give you only a small dose."

"The little you gave me is nothing. It doesn't help at

all. I need more," he insisted and with that he snatched the stick from me. Breaking off a larger piece, he dropped it into his tea.

I told my father what happened. "Poor Samuel," he said. "He's been through so much. Next time just take a little piece of opium to him. Don't take the whole stick."

The next morning, when I went into Samuel's room with the usual cup of tea, Samuel was dead. Some of our Assyrian people living in the same building buried him with his clothes and shoes on.

A few days after Samuel died, a mother came to my father crying, "My daughter has just died and I don't know who I can get to bury her."

My father looked at me. "Benjamin, go get another boy to help you, and bury this girl." I had never buried anyone before and withdrew from the thought of it. "This woman needs your help, Son." I knew my father would have done it himself if his health had permitted.

My friend and I took a shutter from the building, tied the young girl on it, and then covered her with a cloth. The two of us carried her outside the city, stopping to rest at intervals. We placed her in a ditch and covered her as best we could. We brought back the shutter and replaced it. The woman paid my friend and me the equivalent of fifty cents each for our services. This is the kind of experience that can make a boy grow up fast.

Chapter 6

Refugees

Pale early-morning sun found its way through an open window near my pallet. Where had the night gone? Had I spent half the night in my reverie? I was still heavy with sleep and turned my back to the sun, intending to catch another short nap.

The orphanage kitchen was coming alive as pots and pans clanked and pleasant voices of the kitchen crew filtered into the big dormitory where the boys slept. My stomach told me it was time to get up and eat, but my sleepy body refused to stir. A wakeup bell made the decision for me and the whole room eventually came alive. We folded our mats, washed our faces in basins of water—toilet facilities were outside—and a little later we got in line for our morning ration of soup.

The British made wooden guns for us and drilled the orphans who were old enough to participate in warfare tactics and marching. This gave some organized exercise and structure to our days.

I stayed in the orphanage the remainder of the summer and on through fall. In late November my stepmother showed up at the orphanage. She looked rejuvenated. Her eyesight was restored and she looked nice. She was dark-headed and a bit younger and shorter than my mother had been. She, like my mother, was a good cook and housekeeper.

I remember being somewhat embarrassed when my father married her. The thought of my father being married to someone besides my mother was not easy for me to handle. But I soon got over these feelings. She was a good Christian woman. When she left me, before I came to the orphanage, she was sick and filled with panic at the thought of taking care of herself in a strange city after my father died. We had all been through so much heartache that I would not hold this decision against her.

"Benjamin, there's a town outside Hamadan called Kermansha, where the refugees are put in empty houses and are cared for. I will take care of you until you grow up and then you can take care of me."

I said goodbye to my orphanage friends. Packing was no problem since I had nothing but the orphanage clothing I wore. The weather was cool and I now wore shoes.

My stepmother's friends helped us get settled in Kermansha, where we stayed through December. A Christian couple in England, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, had heard of our circumstances through my brother Andrew. They got in touch with Timothy in Iraq and sent him money to locate me and see that I got an education.

Timothy found my stepmother and me and helped me prepare to return with him to the tent city of Bakuba, Iraq (a suburb of Baghdad). My stepmother seemed relieved

of the responsibility of caring for me and went back to live with her friends.

Timothy, at this time, was in the service of the British army, appointed as supervisor of a civilian army of workers—men, women and young people—in road construction.

One day an officer approached Timothy. "Find me a mistress from among the refugees," he ordered.

"Sir, I am a Christian and these refugees are my people. I love them and could never stoop to such actions."

"You'll regret this!" the officer snarled, shaking his fist in Timothy's face.

The officer commanded two soldiers to strip Timothy to the waist. "Whip him for insubordination!"

Timothy was made an open spectacle before a crowd. They tied him to an army vehicle and whipped him on the back with lashes that tore at his flesh.

Timothy's wife, Anna, had been restrained by the soldiers so she would not interfere. But when she saw that they were going to kill her husband, she broke loose from their grip, and threw herself upon Timothy, and saved him from his tormentors. It was the mercy of God that both of them were not killed.

For three months Timothy was bedridden, with no medical help, lying on his stomach to give the deep wounds a chance to heal.

Anna nursed Timothy back to health. This episode ended his services with the British. There was no way to prosecute that unjust officer. Timothy would bear the marks of that beating until his dying day.

We left the camp and moved to Baghdad, where Timothy rented two large rooms and began to conduct church

services and fellowshiped with some of his former Christian co-workers.

In the spring of 1919, Anna bore twins, Josiah and Lydia. The potential for having twins must have been passed on from the Urshan family.

Having two babies at once during those strenuous and unsettled days was a strain on Timothy and Anna, but the joy they brought to the home was a great compensation. The loss of two-year-old Mary at the end of the march had left them childless.

Timothy received a letter from Andrew. "Some of the brethren in the United States and I are sending money to help you with your missionary work. We feel it would be in God's will for you to move to Palestine, a country that is under the mandate of the British. You can continue your missionary activities there."

Timothy immediately made plans to leave, gathering their few belongings together. The trip from Baghdad to the port of Basra by horse and carriage was difficult with two small babies.

After a few days Timothy was able to book our passage on a Japanese freighter to Bombay, India. We had no cabin on the ship, but slept on the deck and ate our own cheese, bread, and dried fruit. A day or so out in the Persian Gulf we experienced a bad storm. The ship churned in the waves and so did our stomachs. Timothy and I were deathly sick. Timothy actually thought he was going to die. He just could not tolerate food. I think he was still weak from the ordeal he experienced in Iraq.

The babies were very fretful but came through all right. Anna did not get sick at all. How we envied her!

After two weeks of sailing we arrived in Bombay. I

could have kissed the ground! It was so good to have something solid under my feet.

We soon found the place where the refugees were staying. Timothy made contact with a Pentecostal English lady missionary who helped us. In a short while this lady wanted to return to England for a rest and asked Timothy to take her place, which he gladly did.

After being in Bombay a short time, Timothy's health became bad, the oppressive heat adding to his misery. We soon had to put him in the British hospital there.

Night after night Anna slept on the floor in the hospital ward to be near and to care for Timothy. I became the baby-sitter for the twins while Anna was at the hospital, which proved to be a very challenging job.

One day when Anna was at home with the babies, I took the tram to the hospital to visit my brother. He was in a ward with many other patients.

His face was drawn and pale and his voice barely audible. "Ben, I'm going to die, and what's going to happen to Anna and the twins—and you?"

No, it couldn't be. Timothy couldn't die. I couldn't bear the thought of losing another family member. My eyes filled with tears and I nervously twisted my cap in my hands.

"Ben, you had better pray that God will heal me," Timothy added.

I threw my cap on the floor, knelt down, and began to pray. Tears ran down my cheeks and my hands were raised to heaven. "Oh God, please spare Timothy. Heal him in Jesus' name," I desperately prayed in my mother tongue while patients all around the ward looked at us with amazement, not understanding the Assyrian language.

God heard and answered that simple, earnest prayer.

When Anna came to be with Timothy that afternoon she found him much better, and in a few days he was released from the hospital.

I was under Timothy's care and he was like a father to me. He was very hard on me and made me "toe the line." Once I sneaked into a theater, which was a forbidden worldly pleasure, and Timothy found out about it. He gave me a thrashing for it.

I did the food shopping for the family. Timothy said, "Ben, if you can save any money, let me know, and I'll let you have what you save." I suppose he felt sorry for me; there seemed to be no work available for a boy my age in the overcrowded city.

I accumulated some money with bargains I found. One day Timothy came to me and said, "Ben, I'm hard up for money. Could I use some of the money you've saved?"

Reluctantly I let him have it. And that was the end of that money.

After living in Bombay for nearly a year, Timothy made plans to leave for Palestine. With money sent from Mr. and Mrs. Thompson in England for me, he helped book my passage to France and on to England. Andrew had made arrangements with this Pentecostal couple to help me eventually get to the United States.

Chapter 7

The Trip to England

Anna helped me pack my suitcase, laundering my clothes and bedding for my trip to England. All the money I had was in gold coins, which Anna sewed inside my vest to use as I needed it. And Timothy had managed to get some francs for my trip into France.

Separating from Timothy and his family, not knowing when or whether our paths would ever cross again, was very difficult for me. My brother and I said our goodbyes, promising to keep in touch.

Anna seemed touched over our parting, her eyes misty with tears. "May God watch over you, Ben," she said.

I looked at the twins. I had grown quite fond of them. They had brought a much needed element of joy to the home. I turned quickly and boarded the freighter, looking back once to wave. I could have easily cried, but I clamped my teeth together and blinked back the tears. I had to be manly. I swallowed hard several times and was

able to fight back the tears. This move was for my good and eventually I would join Andrew in America, I kept trying to convince myself.

My baggage consisted of a pillow, two blankets, a suitcase containing food for my journey and a change of clothing, and a Persian rug the size of a bedside mat. The rug, in shades of blue and deep red, was tightly rolled and tied to be carried under my arm. It was to be a gift for the Thompsons.

There were other Assyrian refugees on the freighter, and I busied myself scanning faces to see if I knew anyone. But none was familiar.

We sailed the Mediterranean Sea for twenty days, sleeping and eating in the hold of the ship. At times the voyage was rough and the waves washed over the deck, soaking our bedding and making life miserable. I always kept on my vest with the gold pieces sewn in it so it would not be stolen.

When we came to Marseille, France, we disembarked and were taken to a large building. The next couple of days the city officials examined all the immigrants and did their best to assist us.

My destination was England. I had in my possession an envelope on which Timothy had written these words in English: "Please take this boy to Mrs. Cantell's Missionary Home, 93 Highberry Park, London, England."

Whenever I needed help to trains or depots, I showed people the envelope. The Lord provided helpers who directed me to depots in France.

Arriving in Paris, I gathered my parcels and bundles together and somehow managed to squeeze through the train door. In my haste to get everything off in time, the

strap broke and my bedding scattered near the train's engine. Panic seized me and I feared that with the broken strap I could not put my parcels together, so I quickly shoved the whole thing under the engine, picked up my suitcase and Persian rug and headed toward the main depot.

I discovered that I had to change depots to take another train to another part of France. I would then take a ferry to Dover, England.

A one-armed man was a great help to me. I showed him the envelope with my destination printed on it, and he motioned that he would help me to the right station.

The man called a taxi, asked me for money for the fare, took the right amount of francs from me, paid the driver, and I was once again on my way.

It was an interesting trip. I kept looking to the right and to the left, afraid I would miss something. There were tall buildings, rivers to cross, a glimpse of the Eiffel Tower.

I had no idea where the taxi was taking me, but we finally pulled up in front of a large depot for my last train trip toward the English Channel.

Here I faced another problem. Trains were pulling in and out and I was baffled as to which one I should take. I headed for every train that came and was stopped several times from boarding. I waited most of the day wondering when my train would arrive.

Finally another train arrived, and carrying my suitcase and rug, I headed toward the gate. The conductor looked at my ticket and, to my relief, motioned for me to get on. I had no idea where the train was going—I just had to go by faith that I was being given the right directions. I was

at the mercy of strangers, and more importantly, at God's mercy.

The Lord provided help on the train. A kind, young British soldier read my envelope, showed me where to get off the train, went with me, and took the same ferry.

The soldier and I took the ferry and crossed the channel to Dover. The port immigration officers gave me a physical. When they finished, my soldier friend helped me board the train to London. After another ride, we got off at Waterloo Station in London. The soldier helped me with my baggage and summoned a coach drawn by horses, which, after I thanked the soldier as best as I could and said goodbye, I climbed aboard and headed for 93 Highberry Park. I was dizzy from the long and complicated journey and very glad to arrive at my destination.

The driver took my envelope, walked up the stairs, rang the bell, and a lady answered. I wondered what her reaction would be to me—a perfect stranger and very unkempt. I had not had a bath or changed clothes in weeks. Sister Cantell did not appear to notice. She smiled, threw her arms around me, and kissed me. There were tears in her eyes. And there were tears in mine too. The driver, satisfied that I was indeed at the right place, collected his fare from Sister Cantell and went his way.

I was ushered into the home like a long-lost relative and was completely overwhelmed by the acceptance and Christian love extended to me. The language barrier was a frustration and embarrassment. I could sometimes use motions, but they had their limitations. I knew only a word or two of English.

Sister Cantell opened the letter from Timothy, which explained my circumstances and what was to be done for

me. Andrew had also communicated with the Thompsons and Sister Cantell concerning me.

As this kind lady inquired about my parents and Timothy, all I could say was "kill," all the while thinking I was saying an appropriate word. She must have been amused but was careful not to laugh lest I think she was making fun.

During my three days at this missionary home Sister Cantell saw to it that I took a bath and was given new underwear, shirt, and a brand-new suit with an English cut. A gangling twelve-year-old by this time, my self esteem soared as I studied myself in a tall mirror. I had never owned such a fine suit.

I tried to tell Sister Cantell that I should be on my way to the Thompson's home, where I was to live. With all the pointing, head motions, facial expressions, and pantomimes, between us we seemed to get a few things across. She wanted me to be rested and prepared to make a good impression when I met my new family.

When it was time, Sister Cantell got in touch with Mrs. Thompson. "I have your boy."

After a short train ride and a ferry crossing, and still carrying the Persian rug; under one arm and the suitcase in the other, I finally reached my destination.

Mrs. Thompson and her young daughter, Pauline, met me at the ferry. We took a taxi to Burton's Store, where Mr. Thompson worked. He met us at the main entrance, embraced me, and indicated that I should go home with Mrs. Thompson.

Rose, the maid, helped me carry my things to my room on the second floor. She and the cook, Alice, had rooms on the third floor.

Later that day I met the Thompson's son, Norris, who

had been in school when I arrived. We had a lovely meal together when Mr. Thompson came home. I was treated as a family member and ate with them in the dining room while the cook and maid ate in the kitchen.

I was greatly relieved when the time came for me to present the Persian rug to Mr. Thompson. It was a gift from the old country and my brother Timothy. I had carried it many miles and was glad to be relieved of it.

The rug was accepted with pleasure and taken to the yard, where it was brushed and swept, and then laid near one of the beds on the second floor of that beautiful home. I was awed by the Thompson's spacious home, lovely furniture, and style of living. I had never eaten at a table so richly set with bone china and silverware and professionally served by a maid and cook. Although my family was considered rather affluent in Persian culture before the massacres, my former life could not compare with this English lifestyle, which, to me, bordered on opulence.

As kind as everyone was, I had bouts of homesickness when the very core of me ached for the glimpse of a blood relative. My intellect was aware of the unusual opportunity I had in the Thompsons' home, but my heart was still closely linked to the familiar faces of my people.

The first few weeks with the Thompsons were difficult for all of us due to the language barrier. It was very hard for me to express myself or answer their queries. But little by little I learned some basic words. Within three months, by listening constantly to their conversations, I picked up enough English to be able to communicate in some basic areas.

Not only did I have a new language to learn but a very different lifestyle to which to adjust.

Chapter 8

Life with the Thompsons

The Thompson family was surprised when I began to pronounce difficult words. As I was not able to attend public school because of the language barrier, Mr. Thompson arranged for private lessons for me with a fine gentleman and his wife who were excellent instructors.

Mr. Thompson owned two grocery stores (the Burton Stores), one in Gravesend, Kent, and another in Woking. He followed a strict daily schedule and encouraged the rest of the household to do the same.

Our day began at 6:00 A.M. Before breakfast, one of my chores was to care for about one hundred Leghorn chickens. It was hard for me to get excited about working that early in the morning, but I soon adjusted.

After chores, the cook served a nourishing breakfast. Following breakfast was family devotions as Mr. Thompson read the Bible to us and we all prayed. Then he was to be in his office by 8.00 A.M.

Norris, the Thompsons' son, and their daughter, Pauline, went to school, and I went for my private instructions especially focused on learning English. The three of us children rode bicycles to school, and Mr. Thompson rode a motorcycle.

At noon the family had lunch together and then went back to the office and school. For the rest of the afternoon I went to a cabinet shop owned by Burville and Steen. Mr. Thompson wanted to teach me a trade while I was with them. I received some good hands-on training in this shop. I had never known anyone who was not a relative to be so generous to a stranger, such as I was, and to help him prepare for his future.

A delicious evening meal was served between 7:00 and 8:00 P.M. (on nights we did not go to church), and we spent the rest of the evening with homework and reading. At 10:00 P.M. family worship began with Mr. Thompson reading from the Scriptures as he had at the start of the day. Then we all knelt, and each one took his turn at praying, even me with my halting English.

We then retired to our rooms, taking the beautiful staircase to the second floor and the cook and maid to their third floor quarters. This spacious home called The Eversley was located on Park Avenue. It had a good-sized greenhouse, a lawn, a tennis and badminton court, and a lovely rose and flower garden. Once a week a gardener came and worked in the yard.

Across the street was a fruit orchard. Mr. Thompson got someone to build chicken coops and fence in an area for one hundred white Leghorn chickens to run.

I fed the chickens table scraps mixed with mash both morning and evening and gathered the eggs, which were

sold to individual customers. I also worked in the garden and mowed the lawn. There were plenty of things to do in our well-scheduled days.

When I came to live with the Thompsons, Mrs. Thompson somehow communicated to me, "You are much too tall for a twelve-year-old. I think you must be thirteen instead. You probably lost track of your age during those awful days you went through. I'm going to put thirteen on any papers we sign for you." In the ordeal I had been through, I'd had enough experiences to make me even older than thirteen, and our family had lost any official papers we might have possessed, so I chose not to quibble over the matter. And besides, I didn't know enough English words at the time to help me quibble!

I remember learning to ride the new bicycle the Thompsons bought for me. Bikes were not used in Persia and I had never gotten the chance to learn to ride one. Learning to ride one just did not come naturally. Somehow, I could not seem to understand how the brakes functioned and that they could actually stop when pressure was applied.

There was a hill near the house, and one day while going down it, I began to pick up speed. A pedestrian, an older man, stepped into the street to cross and I panicked. I got so frustrated that I could not even ring the bell to warn him. I ran right into the man and sent him sprawling. When I finally stopped the bicycle I rushed back to help him get to his feet. "I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I am just learning to ride a bike," I sputtered.

"Sorry? Sorry? A lot of help!" the irate but not seriously injured man shouted. "Take your bicycle back up the hill and park it!"

Chagrined, I walked the bike back up the hill and put it on the back porch.

As I grew into my teen years I struggled with the problems of youth. While I had no desire for bad habits such as drinking or smoking, which were common then, my heart was not truly converted. When Andrew had come back to Persia from the United States, I had received a spiritual awakening but I had never been baptized with the Holy Ghost.

The terrible experiences of suffering during the massacres of the Christians, the loss of my mother and father, and the days of destitution after the loss of my father all teamed up to create in me a sense of hardness against humanity. My heart was sinful, and I began to rebel against those who tried to convert me. I felt that my childhood had been stolen from me, and I found myself reaching out for the pleasures of this life to compensate for my loss. I went to church because it was required of me, but I was bored by the long services. Even the messages in tongues and interpretation annoyed me as I withdrew from godly influences.

A sad letter from Andrew came one day telling me about the death of our brother Josephus. He and our cousin Jonathan Urshan had come to the United States in 1917 with Andrew, settled in Chicago, and found work.

Josephus and Jonathan were like brothers; they got along better than many brothers.

In 1920 Josephus caught a bad winter cold, took pneumonia, and died. Two weeks after Josephus's death Jonathan was found dead in his room.

A medical examination could not determine what caused Jonathan's death. When the physician learned

how close the two young men were from childhood and the support they were to each other when immigrating to America, he told Andrew, "I'm certain that this young man has died of a broken heart."

I tucked Andrew's letter in a dresser drawer, fell across the bed, and wept. I lost my appetite. When I tried to eat, I felt as if I would choke.

Mr. and Mrs. Thompson tried to console me by taking me to London and did their best to lift my spirits. As I sat across the table from them in a fine restaurant, they tried to get me to eat. "Ben, you're going to get sick if you don't start eating. Order anything you want from the menu," Mrs. Thompson said, unshed tears brimming her eyes. "You've been through a lot and this is a terrible grief to add to it, but the Lord will help you through it."

"Why did the Lord have to take Josephus? He was so young. He didn't even get a chance to marry and have a family. It's not fair. I'll never see him again," the words tumbled out. The inequity of a promising young man being cut down in his youth deluged me with unanswered questions. I would need some time to sort it all out.

Each year the Thompson family took their vacation in another country in Europe, such as Switzerland, Italy, or France. The cook and maid also took their vacations.

"Ben," Mr. Thompson said one June day, "we're going to vacation in France this summer. We'd like to take you with us. There are so many interesting places we want you to see."

Thinking that they might let me stay at home alone and that I would be able to do as I pleased, I replied, "Thank you for asking me, but I think I'll stay here."

"Oh, we wouldn't leave you alone. We'll make arrangements for you in the home of one of our friends," Mr. Thompson informed me.

Thinking I would still have more freedom than if I went on the trip with them, I decided to stay but later discovered the supervision was more strict than the Thompsons' home! I even had to make a report of all my activities. I was glad when the Thompsons returned.

On another occasion when the family went on vacation I chose to stay with a young man preparing to be a missionary. This situation was much better than the other home as the young man was instructed to show me interesting museums and other sights in London.

If only I had understood the great cultural experience of seeing the world that the Thompsons were offering me, I could have immeasurably enriched my life. But teenagers can be shortsighted.

Chapter 9

The Immigrant

I kept in touch with my brothers during my stay in England. I had good use of the English language and was old enough to get a job, so when the time was right I could secure a visa without any problems and go to the United States. I knew my brothers would be ready for me to join them. That they were Pentecostal preachers who were sold out to God and His work did not seem to bother me even in my unspiritual condition. My love of family bridged that chasm.

"Ben, you're restless and reaching out for worldly pleasures," Mr. Thompson told me one day. "It may be time for you to join your brothers. They may be able to influence you in spiritual matters better than my wife and I have been able to do."

"I've been thinking that I'd sure like to be with my brothers," I said. "You've been real kind to me and I am in debt to you, but maybe it's time to move on."

"You don't owe us anything, but it would make us very

happy if you'd turn you life over to God. We hope the time you spent with us was pleasant. We love you, Ben, and want God's best for you," Mr. Thompson said.

In the next few days Mr. Thompson and I went to London and obtained a visa to enter the United States. He booked my passage, tourist class, on the *SS Mauritania*, a steamer that sailed from Southhampton to New York.

As I folded the nice things the Thompsons had bought for me and packed them neatly in the new suitcase Mrs. Thompson had given me, I counted my blessings. I remembered the few pieces of clothing I had brought to England. The nearly six years had added much to my life in culture, language, occupational skills, and spiritual exposure (although at the time I did not place much emphasis on the spiritual element).

The Thompsons and I said our goodbyes and waved as the steamer sailed. I was misty-eyed. Goodbyes were never easy, and it seemed that I had said so many of them. These wonderful people had given me so much. They had treated me like their own son. Would I see them again? I watched the shoreline slowly disappear.

The voyage was made more pleasant by the acquaintance of a fine elderly gentleman and a nice young lady whose names have since faded from my memory. We shared a table and the congenial conversation enhanced the pleasure of the six-day passage. Coming to the land of opportunity, I hoped to get into the building construction business and eventually become a contractor.

We docked in Cunard Pier and I saw at a distance my brother Andrew, who had come to meet me. He was living in Chicago at the time. I was excited about seeing Andrew

and wished the process of disembarkment would hurry.

The immigration officers boarded the ship to inspect our passports and visas. A long line of immigrants were processed before my turn came. To my consternation they held my papers and told me to step aside for further examination. I went on deck and spotted my brother.

"They are examining my papers, Andrew," I hollered to him. "I hope nothing is wrong."

"Don't worry. I'll meet with the officials and see what the problem is," Andrew encouraged.

After all the immigrants were processed, several of the passengers were ordered to Ellis Island, and I was one of them.

Andrew got word to me, explaining, "The quota is full and your papers had to be sent to the State Department for further inspection. I can't stay, Benjamin, I must get back to Chicago. I'm turning your case over to an attorney in New York. He'll work on it. I'll keep in touch. Everything is going to work out all right. Just be patient."

I was kept on Ellis with thousands of immigrants who were waiting permission to enter and others who already knew they would be deported. For five weeks I waited.

I slept on a bunk with three above me. Some of them chewed tobacco and spit on me. Others became ill and threw up on those in lower bunks.

"I'm sick with a headache and I feel like I have fever," I told the guard.

He took my temperature and said, "Your temperature is 103 degrees. I'm going to take you to the hospital."

It was like heaven with the sanitary hospital care. Clean sheets and better food and no smelly, spitting immigrants! After a few days the doctor kept telling me that he

would have to send me back to the main dormitory, but I kept complaining about my legs bothering me. I was allowed to stay a few more days, but eventually I had to go back.

After five weeks at Ellis Island I got my deportation papers. I was too old to sob openly, but I sure did feel like it. I was brokenhearted. My dreams came shattering down around my feet. The Statue of Liberty may have said "Welcome" to some immigrants, but to me it said, "Go back!"

For thirty-five days that statue tantalized me. My ship fare was lost. My spirits dragged. It was back to square one.

Despite the efforts of Andrew, the lawyers, and even a congressman from Wisconsin who was a friend of Andrew's father-in-law, D. I. Hammergren, I could not enter the United States.

I got word to the Thompsons of my plight. When I got back to Gravensend the Thompsons welcomed me and wept because of my great disappointment. With tears coursing down her face Mrs. Thompson said, "Ben, I knew you would suffer, that it wouldn't be easy, but I didn't think it would be that bad!"

"I'm going to talk to someone in the American embassy in London," Mr. Thompson said. Later he discovered that the quota for Persia had been filled for sixteen years and I was still a citizen of Persia.

In the meantime Andrew suggested that I immigrate to Canada. Andrew, while pastoring in Chicago, also had the responsibility of a church in Montreal, Canada. He arranged for my trip there in October 1923 on the *SS Antonio*, another Cunard Line steamer. The Thompsons

paid for this trip, and I arrived in Canada on October 28 with eighty-eight dollars in my pocket. I was on the last ship before the St. Lawrence was closed to navigation for the season. In this way I would eventually get into the United States through Canada.

Andrew was not able to meet me but had told Brother Reed, who was in charge of Emmanuel Mission, about my arrival, and he met me. With him were Brother and Sister Jones and Brother Oscar Atkinson, a boarder at the Joneses' home. Oscar, a bachelor, was a man of prayer as well as a Bible scholar. He worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway. These were my first friends in my new land, and I was impressed with them.

It was arranged that I stay in the Joneses' home. Brother Reed felt they would be a good influence on me, since they were zealous soulwinners and faithful to the church. The Joneses, who had two boys and a girl, occupied a three-bedroom, second-floor apartment. Also with them was a lady who had lived with them most of her adult life, and Oscar Atkinson was also a boarder. I was to share a room with Brother Oscar, who was paying eight dollars per week for room and board.

The eighty-eight dollars I had would not last long without a job and cold winter upon us. This money would last less than three months. I was faced with the hard reality of making it on my own. I didn't have the Thompsons to lean on, and I surely did not want to be a burden to these new friends!

I started at once looking for a job. The navigation had closed for the winter, putting many out of jobs. The building trade, in which I had some expertise, had also closed down. Though I sought work from morning until evening

I could not find a job.

"Do you think you could help me find a job?" I asked Brother Reed. "I'll see," he replied. The next day or so he told me there was an opening for a maintenance helper. This job lasted for a few weeks before I was laid off.

No matter how hard I tried I could not find a steady job. There was a lot of snow, so I tried the railroad yards, where I was hired to shovel snow from the yards and rails. I started working as many hours as possible to pay for my room and board. These experiences of struggle and anxiety were quite a letdown from what I was used to while in England with the Thompson family. There I had a room of my own and ate the finest food prepared by the family cook. My carefree days were over.

Chapter 10

Spiritual Hunger

It surprised the Jones family to find out that I had not been baptized in water and had not been filled with the Holy Ghost. They encouraged me to make a move in that direction.

"You pray that the Lord will provide me with a steady job first," I said.

"If you seek the Lord and His kingdom first, the Lord will provide a job," Sister Jones said.

I tried several temporary jobs but could not seem to nail down a permanent one. By this time the good spiritual atmosphere in the Joneses' home and Spirit-filled young men and women in the church began to impress me. There was John Paterson, Albert Fuller, Joe Gregory, Jimmy Rutz, and others whose consecrated and upbeat lifestyles influenced me in a profound way.

If God could bless these young people in such a way, He could bless me too, I thought, so I set my heart to seek the Lord.

In February 1924 I wanted to be baptized and at the same time I was stricken with a bad cold and cough. It had gotten so bad that someone suggested that I seek medical help. Still I decided to be baptized. It was a very cold wintry night in the basement of the old St. Andrews church on Beaver Hall Hill. Ice shimmered in the baptistery. When Brother Reed baptized me in Jesus' name and I came up out of the cold water feeling the warmth of the Spirit of God all over me, I was completely healed. The cough was gone!

I put Matthew 6:33 to the test: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." God opened opportunities for work and I was not only able to meet my expenses for room and board but also to start a savings account. I attended church regularly and on nights we did not have services I spent long hours reading the Bible through. I had never been motivated to do this in times past.

A few months after I arrived in Montreal, when the weather was right for traveling, Andrew came to see me. Other than the fleeting glimpse of Andrew I got from the deck of the *Mauritania* in New York harbor, I had not been with him since the summer of 1916, when we parted in Russia. Now eight years later I was a man, taller than my father had been and taller than Andrew. There was so much to talk about. We had corresponded during those years we were apart, but many things are not communicated through letters.

Andrew and Mildred now had two children, Grace, who was nearly six years old, and Nathaniel who would be four years old in the summer. Another baby was on the way. Joseph, my brother just older than I, was in Chicago.

He was attending evening classes at Moody Bible Institute and had learned the printing business. I was eager to see all of my relatives.

I enjoyed Emmanuel Church and the fine group of Christians. Some of them were well-to-do: Brother John Paterson Sr. was a successful Prudential Insurance agent; Brother Reed, a superintendent for an engraving company; Brother Hopkins, a florist; Brother Dugas, a superintendent in a shipyard. Many other families held good jobs and had comfortable homes.

There was a buoyancy and excitement in the people and the church services that made me want to be like them. A hunger to be filled with the Holy Ghost began to grow in my heart.

How well do I remember the night of November 10! I knelt at the altar and lifted my hands in surrender and worship, tears coursing down my face. Sister Jones jerked my tie off. "Loose him and let him go!" I heard her say.

I was wearing an English-cut suit the Thompsons had bought for me. I didn't want to mess it up. But before I knew how it happened, I was lying on my back speaking in other tongues. I must have spoken in tongues for a whole hour or more. What a joyous experience it was! Why had I waited so long to get it? This baptism of the Spirit changed my whole outlook on life. It was a right-about-face, attitude-changing experience. I was a new person. Paul with his experience on the Damascus road that turned his life around had nothing on me!

The hardness from my growing-up days and the mistrust inbred in me by my culture was taken care of. I was newborn.

Brother Reed resigned the pastorate of the Emmanuel

Mission and my brother Andrew sent his assistant from Chicago to fill in until Brother A. O. Moore could assume the pastorate.

In November 1924, Brother and Sister W. R. Pair came to Montreal to hold revival services. It was during that meeting that I received the Holy Ghost. Later I had the opportunity to lead some of the church services. Brother John Paterson, our youth leader, and I spent many hours in prayer. Prayer was no longer a ritual, a dull duty, for me, but it brought me into the very presence of God.

John Paterson's strong leadership fired up the young people. We studied Finney's lectures on revival and Este Gordon's teachings on the ministry of prayer, and after working all Saturday morning, we'd stuff our pockets with tracts and head for the park. We'd witness to people, hand out tracts, and invite people to church.

By this time I had a steady job at a large sash and door factory, working ten hours a day. I made sixteen dollars per week and used eight of it for room and board. In two years I had saved enough money to go to Bible college. In those days there were no Bible schools of our faith, so I asked Andrew to arrange for me to go to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

In Andrew's reply he wrote, "I'm glad you want to go to Bible college and have a desire to learn, but Moody is not a Pentecostal college. Why don't you take your Bible and get down on your knees and study under the leadership of your pastor?"

I followed Andrew's admonition but I did take a correspondence course from Moody Institute on evangelism and I completed it.

I was happy working in the sash and door factory, but Brother Moore and Brother Pair encouraged me to consider going into the ministry full time. God had already been dealing with me about it.



Persian Pentecostal young men with whom Andrew Urshan (center of photo) associated. Timothy Urshan (seated on floor to left) is pictured with them when he came to the United States to bring Andrew back to Iran at their father's request.

Chapter 11

The Young Evangelist

In 1927, I left my job and started evangelizing. I gave my tools to Albert Fuller. Later when I took a pastorate I wished I had not been in such a hurry to dispose of them.

I took a train to St. John, New Brunswick, where the Davis sisters were being used mightily of God. I traveled to my speaking engagements by train or bus, getting clergy fare, which sometimes was half fare. Occasionally someone took me by car. The cheapest gasoline I remember was nine cents per gallon. I had a good suit with two pairs of pants. On occasion I carefully laid a pair of pants between two mattresses at night to get a "press" job!

In St. John people were being baptized and receiving the Holy Ghost in almost every service. Revival was in full bloom. I spent much time in prayer and seeking God's anointing during this time I was with the Davis sisters.

This first meeting was very encouraging to me—preaching to large crowds and seeing definite results.

My brother Joseph came from Chicago to see me. What a good time we had catching up on all those missing years we had been separated. I hated to see him leave.

My next meeting was in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Brother Adams was in charge of the revival. After this Brother Wynn Stairs from St. Stephen started a new work. He was single, like myself, and we had living quarters in back of the hall where the meetings were held. Brother Stairs struggled financially with the new work and had trouble paying the rent, so he was not able to help me financially. After three weeks I left for Montreal and from there I went to Toronto to be with Brother and Sister Howard Goss. I stayed in the basement of the church, tended the furnace, and assisted in the services. Brother and Sister Goss had a good work going and a number of prospective workers. They conducted evening classes to train the young people in studying the Bible and in working for the Lord. I was privileged to attend these classes.

By this time I had been in the work of the Lord for about a year. I felt that my time was up in Toronto so I fasted for three days, seeking God's will for His direction for me. Being without food and water for that length of time, I developed a severe headache.

I called Brother Goss to pray for me and immediately the headache left me. I broke my fast, feeling that I had "prayed through."

I was never anxious to be ordained, but Andrew felt that I was ready and he mentioned it to Brother Goss. He wanted me to join him in Winnipeg in a revival meeting

for which he was scheduled. Brother Goss agreed that I was ready for ordination. Brother Frank Small came from Lindsay, Ontario, where he had opened a new work, and he and Brother Goss ordained me on October 28, 1928, on my birthday.

I joined Andrew in Winnipeg to help in the revival in the Apostolic Temple. The first service on that fifteen-degree-below Sunday morning was attended by around five hundred people, and there were close to a thousand for the evening service. Services were held every night of the week, and Andrew preached under the mighty anointing of the Holy Ghost. The large church auditorium was filled each night, and God broke through with power, baptizing many people with the Holy Ghost.

Each Friday night a baptismal service was conducted, and ten to fifteen people were immersed in the name of the Lord Jesus. This continued for three weeks.

Andrew closed the meeting and I was given the "opportunity" to follow him. It was hard for a young preacher like me to follow such an experienced evangelist! As might be expected, I spent most of the day in church on my face in prayer asking God to help me and anoint me. And He did.

In those days it was not uncommon for preachers to wear holes in the knees of their trousers and even wear holes in the toes of their shoes from kneeling in prayer.

While in prayer, God gave me a vision of my future ministry. In one vision I saw an auditorium that had a high platform, and a mass of people filled the auditorium.

My vision was fulfilled in St. John, New Brunswick, on Sunday evening as I entered the hall called the Pythian Castle. There it was as I had seen in my vision. I stepped

on the platform with Brother and Sister Crabtree and the Davis sisters (who were co-workers), and I looked upon a thousand faces of humble fishermen and their wives who were hungry for God and had come to hear the gospel. At the close of the services many responded to the altar call.

At the time Andrew and I were at the Apostolic Temple (Notre Dame and Hargrove streets), Brother and Sister R. A. Reynolds were the pastors. This couple had been used of God in the ministry of healing throughout western Canada, and had taken charge of the Apostolic Temple shortly before Andrew's revival. The Reynoldses told Andrew and me that their stay in Winnipeg would be short as they had plans to go to England and take the Oneness message to the English people.

A well-to-do wheat farmer in Alberta had promised that after the harvest he would pay their expenses. On the strength of this promise, Brother Reynolds resigned the church and went to Calgary to prepare for their trip.

The farmer had a bumper crop. His contribution would have amounted to three thousand dollars, which would have taken care of this missionary trip. But the farmer backed out of his promise, and the Reynoldses had to cancel their trip.

After I finished my two weeks of meetings at the Apostolic Temple in Winnipeg, I went to Regina, Saskatchewan. Brother W. E. Storie was the pastor, and the meetings were held in a converted theater downtown. Brother Storie had added an indoor baptistry. The auditorium was well filled every night of the revival with two and three hundred people in attendance. The church was experiencing a constant revival with services held every night of the week. Although we did not knock on doors

and canvass the city, people came from all around. Many of them were from farms. In winter time the people would leave their snow boots outside the church.

During my stay of two weeks, around thirty people were baptized in Jesus' name. One night twenty of those thirty were baptized and most of them received the Holy Ghost. I had good liberty in the Spirit as I ministered.

Brother Storie treated me royally. I stayed in King's Hotel across from the theater, and he gave me tickets so I could eat in the restaurants. I was given good offerings. Brother Storie told me one day, "Brother Ben, you remind me of your brother Andrew, the way you conduct yourself in the pulpit." He couldn't have given me a more appreciated compliment. Andrew had been an inspiration to me since I was a child.

The crowd got too large for the building, so plans were underway to put a gallery in the place.

While in Regina I received a call from Brother Kelley in Calgary, Alberta, to come for a meeting. Brother Storie felt that I should stay in Regina and continue the revival as God was blessing the revival. "I can come back later for another revival," I promised. Finding God's perfect will was not always easy. However, I decided to leave the meeting. I took the train to Calgary and Brother Kelley met me at the station.

When we arrived at his house, he immediately expressed his despondency about how hard it was to reach people in Calgary. Coming from a red-hot revival in Regina, I tried to encourage him. I tried to encourage the people to believe God for a revival but found little response. I wondered if I had made a grave mistake and had missed God's will by leaving the wonderful revival in

Regina and coming to this discouraged despondent people. However, the church began to fast and formed a prayer chain to pray that God would break through discouragement and give the church a revival.

After one of the services, our car broke down on the way home, and we pulled it into a garage for repairs. While we waited it came time for two of our company to keep the prayer chain unbroken, so we suggested that they find a place in the garage to pray. While the mechanic worked on the car, they prayed. Although the spiritual battle was intense, we broke through, and God gave us thirteen new people who repented and were baptized. Several of them received the Holy Ghost.

After the Calgary meeting I left for Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, to conduct a meeting at the Apostolic Temple, pastored by Brother Robert Dawson. The meeting lasted a month with fairly good crowds each night of the week. On Sunday nights the auditorium was filled. The building held about three hundred. Several people were converted.

While in Moose Jaw and in nearby towns, I courted the pastor's lovely daughter, Eleanor. I had casually dated a few girls, but Eleanor's good looks and winning ways won my heart. We talked about marriage. Andrew came to see me about that time and somehow felt "checked" in the Spirit about the marriage. "Benjamin, I don't feel like you should marry this girl. With the rigors of life you go through on the evangelistic field, you're going to need a humble, submissive wife who can adapt to undesirable living conditions. This girl has been raised in a well-to-do family. She has no idea of the adjustments she'll have to make."

I was attracted to Eleanor and the idea of breaking up our relationship was hard to accept. But I trusted Andrew's judgment. He had lived twenty-two years longer than his baby brother. Deep down in my heart, I think I had already wondered if our proposed marriage would be right for either of us.

Eleanor and her folks were upset with our breakup. I prayed hard to get my emotions back on track. But I soon fully accepted it as God's will.

Sometime later Eleanor saw Andrew and reminded him, "You were the cause of Ben and me breaking up."

My next revivals were in Yorktown, Saskatchewan, and Hanna, Alberta. In Yorktown we had good crowds, but it took two weeks of fervent prayer and preaching to break through. Quite a number were baptized and received the Holy Ghost.

When I landed in Hanna, Alberta, the cold weather had set in. A young couple, Brother and Sister Ball, were pioneering a new work. The meetings were held in the basement of a tabernacle that had been under construction.

The church was facing financial problems. One man held an eight-hundred-dollar mortgage on the property. He demanded payment by a certain deadline and the church was not able to meet it, so he turned off the lights.

The next day we called a special meeting to see what could be done. The Lord helped me make an appeal to overcome the problem. I joined in with the people to make pledges for the full amount to free the church from this unreasonable man.

A strong cold wave came to this northern part of Alberta. The home where Brother and Sister Ball were living

was not insulated against this extreme weather. The house was heated by a stove, and they had to pile on the covers to keep warm enough during the night. One morning when Sister Ball got up to tend their three-month-old child, she found that the child had suffocated. These young parents were grief-stricken over the death of their first child. I was asked to officiate at the funeral, which is one of the first I had conducted. These were hard days of sacrifice in pioneering the gospel message in northern Canada.

My next meeting was back in Regina with Brother Storie. The first few nights went well until one night when I preached on the new birth, John 3:5-7, emphasizing the baptism of the water and the Spirit. Brother Storie took exception to this; even though he baptized according to Acts 2:38, he did not believe that water baptism was part of the new birth. In fact, several other preachers in western Canada held to this belief at that time. This was my last meeting with Brother Storie.

The next day an elderly preacher who believed in the eternal security doctrine came to my hotel room. He expressed his displeasure with my sermon on the new birth. He accused me of preaching "water salvation." The Lord gave me grace as a young evangelist to hold my ground and keep a good spirit. "Ananias told Paul, 'Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord' (Acts 22:16). And Acts 2:38 clearly states that water baptism in Jesus' name is 'for the remission of sin.' The Book of Acts that introduced the church age after Jesus ascended is full of accounts of water and Spirit experiences." I tried to reason, but his mind was closed.

When I went back to Calgary I found that Brother

Kelley had shut himself in a room for an extended time of fasting and prayer. He had cancelled all the midweek and night services, holding services only on Sunday.

"Could we begin special services each night?" I asked Brother Kelley.

"No, Brother Ben, not at this time. I feel the prayer and fasting should continue," he said.

Not feeling inspired to join him in this personal fasting and praying vigil, I left Calgary for New Westminster, British Columbia, and began a revival at the Good News Mission in a large Knights of Pythian hall with Brother Deverill, who pastored this work. This assembly had just experienced a great revival under the ministry of two ladies, Sister Peden and Sister Andrews.

William Booth-Clibborn, who wrote the beautiful song "Down From His Glory," held a lengthy revival (1925-26) in this same hall. Some one hundred or more people had been baptized and many of them received the Holy Ghost. A photo of this revival showed that the hall, which could seat four or five hundred people, was filled each night. Brother Booth-Clibborn was an educated man, a wonderful speaker, and he played the violin professionally.

After Sister Peden and Sister Andrews held the revival for Brother Deverill, the lady preachers got mixed up with the teachings of eternal security and the restoration of all things. This created confusion among the people and the work began to wane. Many left the assembly during the dissension and some backslid.

Chapter 12

The First Pastorate

During my stay at New Westminster, Brother Deverill said, "I have a burden for missionary work in Africa. Will you become the pastor of this work?"

I prayed about it and Brother Deverill took the matter before the assembly. I was voted in. I was only twenty-three years old and single. This was the first church I pastored. It seemed that during those years there was a lot of fluidity in the ministry and short-term pastorates were very common. There I was, an evangelist becoming a pastor, and Brother Deverill was moving from pastor to missionary. I don't think we spent much time examining roles. We were occupied with spreading the gospel.

The people were kind to me. For a time I stayed in a hotel three blocks from the mission hall, and I had my meals in a nice restaurant on Main Street. I boarded with the Turner family awhile and then went back to the hotel, where I had more privacy and a quiet atmosphere for studying and praying.

The Lord gave me wisdom as a young preacher to care for this assembly during the year and a half I was there. Many times I claimed the promise in James 1:5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally."

Hard times and depression created unemployment, and many were walking the streets in need. The Lord laid it upon my heart to plan a free meal for the unemployed men twice a week. I made this suggestion to the assembly and they agreed to help. A nice sign was painted and placed in front of the assembly hall on Eighth Street offering the free meals. The ladies prepared and served hamburgers, coffee, and doughnuts—all the men could eat. Some fifty or more men turned out for the first meal. We offered a gospel message and special singing—food for the soul—along with the natural food.

Brother Albert Hopper was a wonderful asset to me in the church work. He led the singing and directed the choir.

Those men who came for food seemed patient and at the end of the service often raised their hands for prayer. This new program put a new spirit among the people, and it became known in the community that we were doing something to help the needy. We did not have the means to take on the task of feeding all of the hungry in our city, but trying in some way to reach a segment of them made us feel better.

As I look back I can see how God helped me in many ways to cope with problems and straighten out misunderstandings in the assembly, which had been misguided by former leaders and led away from the truth. It was not easy to hold the people together in unity.

When I gave Bible studies on the new birth of water baptism in Jesus' name and baptism of the Holy Ghost, the Sunday school superintendent resigned and left the church. Being a graduate of Aimee McPherson's school, she joined the Foursquare group. She held to the teaching that faith and repentance without baptism of water and Spirit was salvation. Others also took exception to the holiness standard and left. However, God helped me to reach others, and the work continued to grow.

During this time I faced different problems. For instance, after a Sunday evening service as we prayed with seekers in the prayer room, one of the lady workers informed me that a young unmarried lady in her twenties had confessed that she was pregnant. She had been deceived by an older man who had hired her for two or three days of housework. After consultation with the elders it was agreed that I should consult an attorney on her behalf.

Her case came before the judge, and the man agreed to a monthly child support payment. We made arrangements with a family to care for her. This young woman was baptized and received the Holy Spirit. When her child was born, I dedicated him to the Lord.

The year and a half of pastoral work in this assembly was very profitable to me. Somehow God uses the sum total of our experiences, successes and failure, to shape and mold us so we can be better equipped for his work. Nothing is lost if we turn it into a learning experience. If experiences make us bitter, they are not only lost to us but they destroy the work, the shaping that God is trying to bring about in our lives.

When Andrew held a revival in Seattle, Washington, I got permission to cross the border and meet him. We

went to a bus depot and sat visiting and having doughnuts and coffee. There was one doughnut left so I wrapped it in a napkin and took it with me. It seemed a thrifty thing to do.

Andrew laughed and said, "Ben, I know you'll never be hard up!" Andrew often related this incident in later years. My family used to call me Badaleo after my Uncle Badal who was a stingy-thrifty person.

Thriftiness can become a flaw when carried too far, and it can cause a person to become stingy with others. But the trait of thriftiness can come around to support one. I trust my thriftiness did not go to the flaw stage.

During the early part of 1929, I put special efforts in revivals, securing the ministry of evangelists M. R. Tatman, Robert Dawson, and A. O. Moore. In February 1929, I was fortunate to be able to bring Elder G. T. Haywood to New Westminster for a two-week Bible conference. I advertised him well in the local papers as well as in the Vancouver papers. His teachings in the afternoons from charts on the "Revelation of the Ages" and his evening preaching, as well as his anointed singing, proved a great blessing to the church. Brother Haywood was an artist, outstanding speaker, and prolific songwriter who wrote well-known songs such as "I See a Crimson Stream of Blood," "The Day of Redemption Is Near," "Coming as a Thief in the Night," "Thank God for the Blood," "Baptized into the Body," and many more. What a privilege it was for me to have known this man of God!

Brother Haywood baptized my brother Timothy in the Jordan River. Brother Haywood died young, but his influence and songs will last several lifetimes. It was said that he died from exhaustion.

Shortly after Elder Haywood's revival I felt that I should get back into evangelistic work and move to the United States, so I resigned as pastor of Good News Mission. The people of the church seemed reluctant about letting me go. Their attitude made me feel good that they had accepted my ministry to them. The special stirring I felt in my spirit made me wonder if things would work out soon for me to move to the United States.

The Syriac Bible of the Assyrians is read from right to left and from the back of the book to the front.



Benjamin Urshan seated in the Thompsons' garden in England at age fifteen.



Benjamin Urshan while in London in 1921. He was about fifteen years old at this time.



Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Thompson and their daughter Pauline, who befriended Ben during some difficult times.



Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Thompson, the English couple who gave Ben Urshan foster care from when he was twelve years old until he came to Canada in 1923.



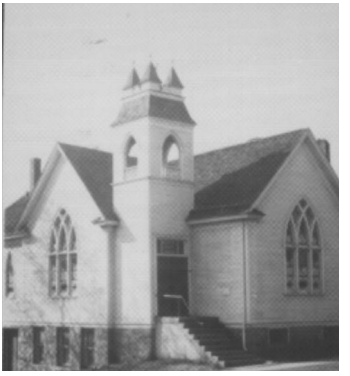
Benjamin Urshan in Los Angeles, California (1930).



Benjamin Urshan, the young evangelist.



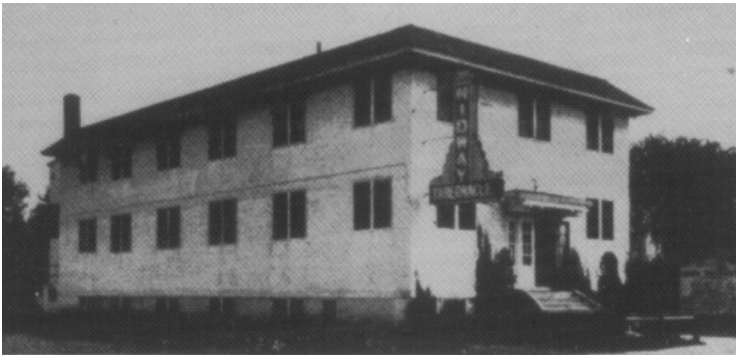
The Urshan home for many years at 1515 East 4th in Duluth. Both their sons were born here, and they entertained many visiting preachers and their families here.



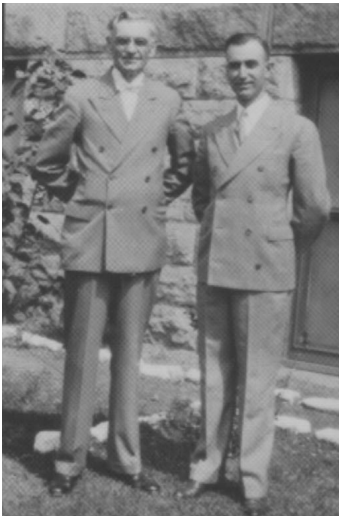
Apostolic Gospel Church in Duluth, Minnesota, where Brother Benjamin Urshan pastored for twenty-five years.



Pentecostal Assembly in Auroraville, Wisconsin, where Alice and Ben's wedding took place.



Midway Tabernacle in Saint Paul. Ben Urshan's second pastorate.



Brother Urshan held a meeting for Brother Small in 1942, who was moderator of the Apostolic Church of Pentecost in Canada.



The “first and the last,” as Ben Urshan and his oldest brother, Andrew, referred to themselves.



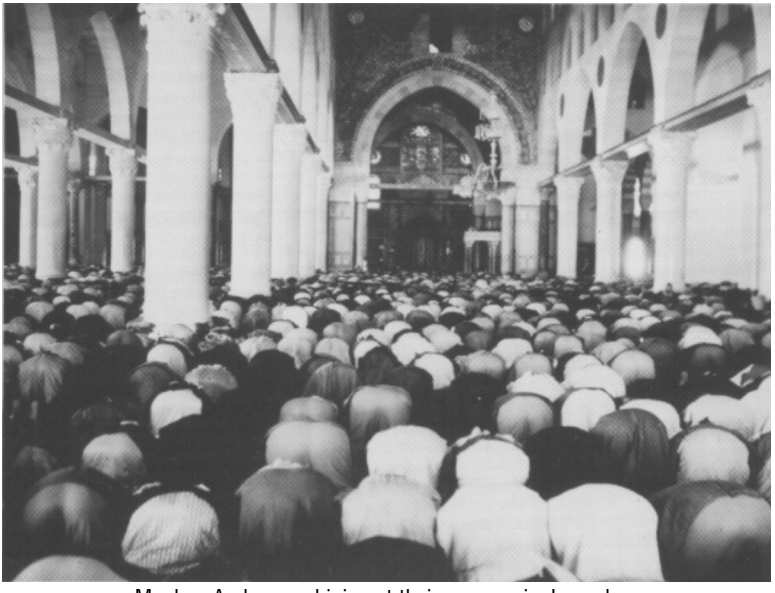
Brothers Vernon Johnson, (at left) and Calvin Rigdon (back right) came to help Brother Ben Urshan in Duluth after they graduated from Apostolic Bible College. Alice Urshan and friend (in front).



Two brothers, Benjamin and Joseph Urshan by Ben’s new 1931 Chevrolet.



A group attending worship service in Tehran, Iran, when the Urshans went to Iran.



Moslem Arabs worshiping at their mosque in Jerusalem.

The Urshans' with an Assyrian priest. They are holding a 500-year-old scroll in Bethlehem. This priest spoke the Aramaic language.





The Ben Urshans' residence where they conducted services while they were in Iran in the 1960s.



Assryrian Christian workers in Iran in 1961 with Brother Robert McFarland and Brother Ben Urshan.



Workers in Abadan, Iran. Standing from left to right: Brothers Zhores Davidian, Ben Urshan, Shurkrilla; (seated) Brothers Worenzo and Ismail Adam.



These men accompanied Brother Urshan (second from left) to the place of his birth near Urmia: Polos Warda, Polos Nesan and Aghajan Abbassi.



This is the last church David Urshan (Ben's father) pastored. In 1961 the roof was gone as well as windows and steeple. Weeds were growing inside.



Brother Urshan's old home near Urmia. Aspen logs are in the yard.



Ruins of the Urshans' old home in 1961.



Brother Urshan viewing the ruins of his once happy childhood home.



Winnowing wheat in Iran, an ancient method in use in the 1960s.



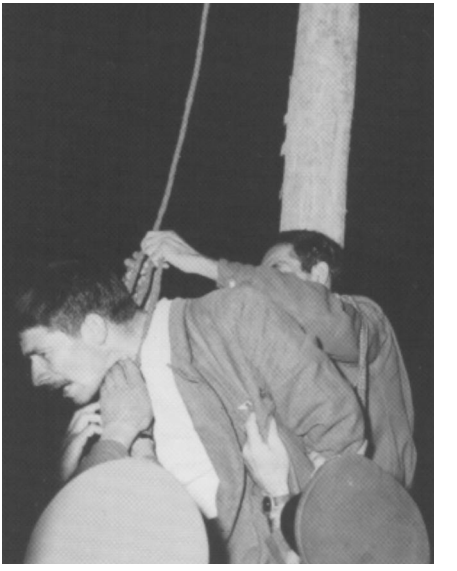
In 1960 they were still threshing wheat in Iran as in primitive times.



Brother Urshan holding an adobe brick outside Tehran, Iran, while he was a missionary there. Most houses there are still built from these bricks.



Another photo of the hanging in Iran.



This man was hanged in a public square in 1961 for raping a twelve year old girl. Islamic laws are severe in the punishment of crimes and immoral acts.



A group of people watching the hanging.

Clintonville Tabernacle in Clintonville Wisconsin, where the Urshans pastored for four and one-half years.





Bethel United Pentecostal Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where Brother Urshan pastored for over sixteen years.



Brother and Sister Urshan and the decorated bus used in a Fourth of July patriotic parade. The church choir was inside the bus singing during the parade.



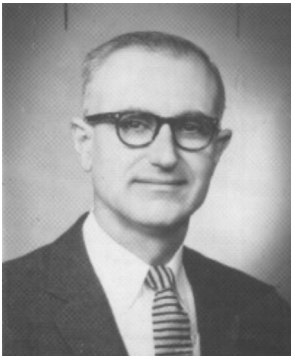
Brothers Benjamin Urshan, Joel Rivas (local pastor), and William Schmidt during a trip to Tepic, Mexico.



One of the many informal marriage ceremonies.



Brother Ben Urshan "young at heart."



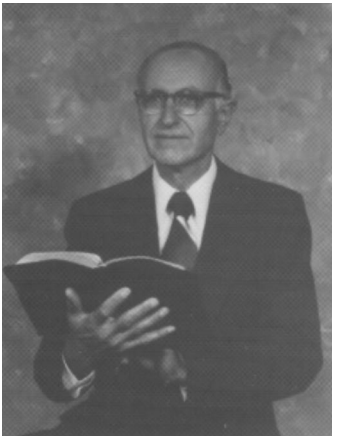
A later photo of Brother Ben Urshan while pastoring.



Brother and Sister Ben Urshan when pastoring in Albuquerque, New Mexico.



Dr. George Lamsa and Brother Ben Urshan in 1973. Dr. Lamsa was an outstanding Bible scholar and Bible translator.



Benjamin Urshan, evangelist, pastor, and Bible teacher.



Four Urshan generations: Benjamin Urshan, son David Urshan, grandson Daniel, and great-granddaughter Andrea.



Members of the Urshan family: Alice Urshan; Lydia Urshan Harbrow and husband Ken; Jonathan Urshan, wife Elizabeth, and son Jon; and the Ben Urshan's son Paul.



Fiftieth wedding anniversary of Benjamin and Alice Urshan, celebrated on August 16, 1981. Included are the Urshans' three children—Joy, David, and Paul—with their spouses and children. Also included are Wendell and Esther Haskins (sister and brother-in-law) and Clarence and Leonora Mielke (Alice's cousin and husband)

Chapter 13

A Visa to the United States

In mid 1929 I made an application at the United States immigration office in Vancouver and entered the States.

My first service was in Seattle with Brother Opsand. While there I met a talented couple, Brother and Sister Thomas Rowell, who played Spanish and Hawaiian guitars and sang. We decided to team up and conduct revivals. Our first revival was in Yakima, Washington, with Brother Ralph Bullock. We had a good revival, and I stayed there longer than I had planned.

While in Yakima a notable miracle took place. Brother and Sister Maulding had a very sick child with a bowel obstruction. They had consulted a doctor but wanted to trust God for the child's healing.

Meanwhile, the Lord laid it upon the heart of a dedicated sister from Portland to come to Yakima and assist

us in praying for several people who wanted to be filled with the Holy Ghost. She took it upon herself to fast and pray for the healing of this child. After three days the child was completely healed.

This incident inspired faith in all our hearts, and we began to conduct a healing service each Friday evening.

Brother Bullock had a good established work in Yakima and was publishing tracts and reaching out to neighboring towns. A new work had been started in Tieton with Brother Casper in charge.

After closing special services in the Yakima church Brother Bullock rented a theater in Wenatchee and we began services there.

A small group of people in Spokane, Washington, had rented a nice church building there and wanted me to conduct a revival in that city. Times were hard because of the Depression, but we made a sacrifice to do some newspaper advertising to reach the people. The Lord blessed the efforts and several people responded.

While in Canada I had made the acquaintance of a Spirit-filled preacher, Dr. David Eugene Olsen. He was a very educated man who was the author of several books, one on science and evolution. I had no idea that he was in Spokane at this time on important business.

He had crossed the street from the Davenport Hotel after lunch to play a game of chess with some men who were staying at the hotel where I was. "I'm surprised that you take time to play chess," I said.

"It's my relaxation after lunch," he explained.

"I'm in a revival meeting in the city and wondered if you'd be kind enough to give me a boost by speaking for me on Sunday afternoon?" I requested.

Dr. Olsen consented and I advertised him in the paper, copying his name with all his degrees from his book *Science and Evolution*, which was to be the subject of his lecture.

When I saw the church about filled, I waited anxiously for the doctor's arrival. What if he failed to come? How would I explain the situation to the audience? I was relieved to see him get out of a taxi, dressed in a long-tailed coat.

I opened the service with "Onward Christian Soldiers," offered a prayer, took the offering, and then introduced Dr. Olsen to the audience. For more than an hour he lectured on the announced subject and the people seemed well pleased. That service gave me a real boost in reaching people for the rest of the revival.

As a young preacher, I had no intention of staying and pastoring the church. I was scheduled with Brother and Sister Thomas Rowell (singers and musicians) to begin a revival in Puyallup, Washington. I reported to Brother Bullock of my leaving Spokane, hoping he could send this group a preacher to carry on the work.

In those days we had no Bible colleges and no group of young ministers from which to draw, nor did we have an organized home missions department to assist in such needs. As a result, several good opportunities for raising up new works were lost.

After finishing my meeting in Spokane, not having a car, I asked a brother if he would take me, my baggage, and some one hundred songbooks (a fairly heavy box) to the bus depot. He consented and met me at the YMCA. I got in his car with my baggage and he headed toward the depot. He took me halfway to the depot, stopped the car,

and said, "This is as far as I can take you."

I got my luggage and songbooks out and struggled the rest of the way, wondering why he could not go any further. I suppose his mouth agreed to give me a ride before his spirit had time to respond—then halfway to the depot his spirit had second thoughts! It was summertime and I had to stop and rest several times before I got to the station. It was a one-of-a-kind experience.

I bought my ticket to Seattle and made connections with Brother and Sister Rowell, the musicians who would take me on to Puyallup.

The Rowells had an old Star car. We made an agreement in our travels that they were to use their car and I was to provide gas and oil, and we would share the offerings.

Every five hundred miles the car had to be greased and the oil changed. I was responsible for this. Fortunately gas could be purchased for about twelve cents a gallon. In some cases we were able to get a free grease job and oil change for purchasing a tankful of gasoline. Brother Rowell insisted on driving thirty-five miles per hour even when we were on good highway. This tried my patience. I wanted to arrive and not spend all the time traveling.

We arrived in Puyallup in late summer, a lovely time of year. It was the time of harvesting berries, and this town was known for its berries.

I stayed in the home of Brother and Sister Kirstin, a lovely family. The Rowells stayed in the Edmund Werner home. Brother Werner was single at this time and was in the poultry business. He had a well-organized, modern chicken farm with about three thousand hens.

We got busy getting handbills printed, and we put

some announcements in the local paper listing subjects that I would deal with.

We opened on Sunday, August 31, 1929, with three services daily: 11:00 A.M., 2:30 P.M. and 7:30 P.M. I had announced a subject for each service. I still have one of the handbills that were used in that revival.

The services were held in a nice downtown hall. We had a good starting-night crowd, and each night of the week the interest grew. Several people received the Holy Ghost, and at the close of the meeting we baptized a dozen or more people in Jesus' name.

During these meetings a group of men formed a woodwind band. They all meant to be helpful, but the loud playing drowned the beautiful music of the Spanish and Hawaiian guitars the Rowells played. But we "held our peace" and did not object to the noise.

When we left for the next revival, Edmund Werner took charge, and with the help of several evangelists the work grew so that a good church was built. After Brother Werner's passing, Brother Gene Ziemke became the pastor and built a very large church.

Our next meeting was in Bend, Oregon, with Sister Marling. We had a packed house almost every night. God confirmed His Word with signs following by baptizing souls with the Holy Ghost, and people were baptized in the river in Jesus' name.

Our next meeting was in Salem, Oregon, with Pastor Rounds, who had nice church facilities. Our revival had been well advertised. The music of the Rowells was an added attraction, so we started with a full house the first Sunday.

The Lord blessed me with the Holy Ghost-anointing

so much I was positive that we were going to have a very successful revival. However, during the latter part of the week I began to experience a state of spiritual depression. I preached but without anointing. I did not reveal my condition to my workers but decided to give myself to fasting and prayer for three days. Brother Rounds and the Rowells could not understand it, but I knew that God was putting me to a test. He wanted to remind me that without Him I was a failure.

After three days, God's anointing returned. It was a feeling of coming out of darkness into light. I was so thankful of God's enabling power again. I trust I will never go through that experience again.

After the Salem meeting we headed to Lodi, California. The church had been going through a spiritual depression. We began to fast and pray for a revival. God honored the sacrifices by giving us a real move of the Spirit. One Sunday we baptized three or four people and three received the Holy Ghost in the baptistery. One of them is the wife of one of our pastors, Sister Francis of Lodi, California, who is still active in God's work.

From this revival we went to Oakland, California, with Brother Harry Morse at the big downtown mission. This church held their services in a large basement in the heart of Oakland. There was much manifestation of worship with tongues, interpretations, singing, and dancing. It seemed to me that little time was given to preaching. But the church seemed to be winning people. Brother Morse conducted a Bible school with several students attending.

Brother Morse was a believer in keeping Saturday as the Sabbath. When I arrived, he called me into his office and informed me, "I have taught my people to keep Satur-

day for the Sabbath. We have a service each Saturday afternoon. You can feel free to attend or not to attend. Preach whatever the Lord lays on your heart."

I assured him that I had no intention of creating friction, that preaching for the salvation of souls was my goal. I left after two weeks with the Rowells and headed for Stockton, California.

The work in Stockton in 1929 was pastored by a lady whose name was Sister Stafford (if my memory is correct). Our stay was short and the Rowells decided to return to Washington State. I would miss them.

I went on to Los Angeles, where Sister Nona House had a mission work. Sister House was my brother Andrew's convert and loved the Apostolic truth. Her mission was located on Temple Street not far from Angelus Temple. She had a good work going with the hall crowded every service. Many people attended out of curiosity to see the Pentecostal manifestations in worship such as singing, dancing, and shouting.

After two weeks of services we had a baptismal service, and among the candidates was a lady of the Dugas family. Sister House was very kind to me. I was a young man in my twenties, and she helped me every way she could. When I decided to move east, she was disappointed and suggested that I take voice lessons and assist her in the work there.

During my stay in Los Angeles I met some of the pioneers of Pentecost: Brother Glenn Cook, the man who baptized Elder G. T. Haywood in Jesus' name, and Brother Frank Ewart, a great preacher. In between services I was able to visit Angelus Temple and hear Aimee McPherson. In those days Los Angeles was a clean and

beautiful city, the Angelus Temple was new, and the surrounding park was beautiful. Every town I entered was new to me. There were so many sights to see, people to meet, and souls to win!

Albuquerque, New Mexico, was my next stop, with Pastor Dale Struble. The church at that time was located at Fifth Street and Bellamah. The city's population was thirty-five thousand.

In this meeting we had some results but not as much visible results as I had hoped for. Brother and Sister Struble were very kind to me.

The trip to Oklahoma City on a bus was a weary one. Roads were bumpy. Some were gravel roads. Sometimes I was the only passenger. The Great Depression hit in the last part of 1929, but signs of it were already in evidence in many places I had preached.

I spent a couple of days in the city, resting and visiting the Gerald Winrod Gospel Crusade. Winrod was the publisher of *The Defender* magazine. He was a friend of Paul Rader, a great evangelist of his day. I went to hear Dr. Winrod preach in the large tabernacle. After the service I introduced myself as one of his subscribers and we had a nice visit. In those days there were no Oneness works in Oklahoma City, to my knowledge.

After a few days I moved on to Tulsa and spent a weekend with Brother and Sister C. P. Williams, who had just started meetings in an old garage. Brother Williams gave me an invitation to return to Tulsa for a longer meeting.

My next meeting was in Spencer, Iowa, where Brother Cleve Kerley was the pastor. Like myself, he was single. I stayed with Brother Kerley during most of December. My

plans were to spend Christmas with my brother Andrew and his family in Chicago. Their fourth child, Andy, had been born in April. Andrew now had four children: Grace, Nathaniel, Faith, and Andrew (or Andy as he was called).

Iowa was known for its corn crops, but the Depression was already spreading across the land. The farmers had trouble selling their crops. They brought ears of corn by the bushel to the basement of the church. It surprised me to see Brother Kerley using dried corn for fuel. He fed the furnace with it. A section of the basement was set apart to store onions and potatoes. We had plenty of onions and potatoes while I was there! However, the church members in Spencer invited us at times for meals at their houses.

I went on to Chicago and spent Christmas and New Year's Day with Andrew and his family. What a happy time it was! I hadn't been with blood relatives at Christmas time since I parted with Timothy and his family in the old country. It was a very special time.

I received a telegram from C. P. Williams while in Chicago asking me to return to Tulsa for a revival. By this time he had secured the West Tulsa Baptist Church for services.

I slept in the unheated basement of the church. This being January, I could not bear the cold weather. We ate mostly vegetables and canned food secured from the county relief program, with very little protein. Whatever the reason, I was very susceptible to the cold weather. I decided to move to the YMCA and got a room for fifty cents per day.

During the first week of the special services, we made

thousands of handbills with a picture of me dressed in Arabic costume. We announced the subject for a Monday evening service as "Christianity versus Mohammedanism." This church seated three hundred people and was packed to the doors with some standing outside wanting to get in.

The comparison of Jesus with Mohammed and the mode of Moslem prayer with Christian worship was well received.

This service started us with a good attendance for three weeks of nightly meetings. About thirty-six people received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and each week Brother Williams baptized converts in the name of the Lord Jesus. This revival brought in quite a number of solid converts who stayed with the church and helped it grow. In later years Brother and Sister Williams opened a Bible school and trained many young people for God's work. Jonathan Urshan, my nephew, and John Kershaw were among them.

Before I went to Tulsa, Brother Benjamin Sayad, an expert chocolate-candy maker came to visit Andrew and heard that I was going to Tulsa. He insisted that I take a case of several dozen beautiful boxes of chocolates. "Sell them for one dollar a box and raise money to help pay your traveling expenses."

It sounded like an enterprising venture, so I took a case. In those days I traveled by bus or train (clergy fare) depending on the travel mode available for the direction I was headed. The ticket from Chicago to Tulsa cost sixteen dollars, a whopping sum for 1929.

I managed to keep the candy in good shape on the train. During the day I peddled the candy in an area of

town that I thought was affluent enough to buy chocolates, but without success.

As I knocked on doors I introduced myself and was repeatedly told, "We can't afford to buy candy, especially at one dollar a box."

A secondhand car dealer who attended our meetings bought a box and was so pleased with the candy that I offered to sell the entire case for fifty cents a box.

At the close of my three weeks of revival meetings, Brother Williams took a couple of love offerings for me, which amounted to sixteen dollars, just enough to get me back to Chicago.

Before leaving Oklahoma I preached two nights for Brother C. P. Kilgore, who was pioneering a work in Skiatook, Oklahoma. I noticed that he and his family were also struggling financially during those hard times. Both C. P. Williams and C. P. Kilgore touched many lives with the Pentecostal message in their long and fruitful ministries.

Returning to Chicago I preached a few times for Brother J. S. Holly, who pastored a good-sized work, and also at Emmanuel Mission where Brother L. R. Mitchell pastored. I felt a great liberty in the pulpit. In those days preachers and saints alike spent much time in prayer and intercession for the lost.

I had a good visit with my brother Joseph in Chicago and with Andrew and his family. Joseph and I were moving in different evangelistic circles but met at times. Though younger than Joseph, I started preaching before he did. After evangelizing for a time, Joseph pastored a church in Caldwell, Idaho, for several years.

In March 1930, I started a meeting in St. Paul, Minnesota. The pastor was a fiery preacher who sang and

played the guitar.

While staying with the pastor and his family in their living quarters of the tabernacle, I noticed that a young lady of the church spent an unusual amount of time with the pastor's wife, serving and helping with the household chores. I also noticed some familiarities between her and the pastor. I felt led of the Lord to warn him of this but was assured that nothing was "going on," and I was not to worry about it.

After a three-week revival, I left for Eau Claire, Wisconsin, where J. P. Rulien was pastor. This assembly met in a good-sized hall on one of the main streets downtown. I stayed in the home of Brother Carl F. Ebert, a preacher and also a builder. The services were well attended, and at times the hall was crowded. Several were baptized and received the Holy Ghost.

While I was preaching in Eau Claire, Andrew was conducting a revival in Auroraville, Wisconsin, at the assembly pastored by Brother Joseph Sargis. Andrew noticed a talented pianist whom he wanted me to meet.

Chapter 14

Two Pastorates and Wedding Bells

Andrew sent word for me to come to Auroraville to speak for the young people's service, with the intent of introducing me to a special young lady.

I looked at the schedule of buses and railway and found that the nearest city with access to Auroraville was Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

Somehow I did not get a clear message of what he had in mind. It wasn't clear that I should speak or meet Alice—a very ambiguous invitation or suggestion.

I closed my meeting in Eau Claire and went to Chicago. It just wasn't a practical trip to make, to travel so far to speak in one youth service.

When Andrew closed his meeting and returned to Chicago, he told me, "Brother Sargis and I had this lovely, talented girl picked out for you to meet and you were scheduled to speak so she could hear you preach and you didn't show up!"

He showed me pictures of Alice. "She's a spiritual girl, talented and very pretty too," Andrew said.

"I'm going to go meet her," I said.

"Forget it, you had your chance. It's too late now; I tried to help you."

But that did not discourage me from going. I wrote to Brother Sargis to see if he could arrange a weekend of services. "I'd like to be with you," I said.

I was excited when he arranged to have me come to Auroraville. While there I was invited to Alice's home, where I got a chance to get acquainted with her—under the close scrutiny of her parents, Brother and Sister Lentz, plus Alice Anita's younger sister, Esther. It was love at first sight for both of us.

I had to leave and get on with my ministry, but I knew in my heart that a special relationship was in the making. We promised to keep in touch through letters and find a way to see each other soon.

When I returned to Chicago, a letter was awaiting me from Albert G. Newstrand, secretary of Midway Tabernacle in St. Paul. It stated that the pastor had to resign and had already left. The warning God led me to give him was not heeded. The church board had decided to ask me to return to St. Paul and assume the pastorate.

On April 30, 1930, I became the youngest pastor Midway Tabernacle ever had, twenty-four years old by my calculation, or twenty-five, if I went by the age Mrs. Thompson said I had to be and put on legal papers and visas!

Even under the unfavorable circumstances of the loss of the previous pastor, I felt in God's will accepting the pastorate. And God blessed my ministry from the start.

During my first summer at Midway Tabernacle, Alice came with her mother to visit with me. We felt it was God's will for us to marry and we started making plans.

Brother Robert Martin and his wife were assisting me in the church services, so I left the church in their care, accepting an invitation to conduct a revival in Winnipeg at Apostolic Temple. While there I decided to meet the American consul and make application for permanent residence in the United States.

Having been voted in as pastor of Midway, I thought I would not have any problem in entering the States again, but I was mistaken. The immigration authorities as well as the consul delayed me, requiring guarantees from the church board of my support.

The six months of delay to reenter the United States were days of testing for me. My wedding plans had to be set aside for a time. I became frustrated and depressed, wondering what the outcome would be for me and what was God's will.

I fasted and prayed and lost weight. My funds dwindled, for I was not receiving any salary. My Canadian friends were kind to me and encouraged me every way they could. Andrew kept in touch, encouraging me. "God had a purpose in all of this. Wait on the Lord and He will work it out for you," he wrote.

Brother R. E. Lange, a businessman in St. Paul and chairman of the church board, was a great help to me in making out the necessary papers to prove my financial support to the satisfaction of the U.S. officials. All of this took six months. It did not concern them that I had a girl to marry and a church to pastor!

Alice and I had to cancel our wedding date of August

30, 1931. This created some embarrassment for her and also a great disappointment for me.

After I closed the meeting at Apostolic Temple, I went to Moose Jaw to conduct a meeting for Pastor Robert Dawson, who later arranged for me to go to Saskatoon and care for the struggling Apostolic Church.

I will never forget the morning Brother Dawson introduced me to the twelve people present in that large church that could seat five hundred or more. Brother Dawson told the people, "Brother Ben Urshan has come to help you. Stand by him. If he cannot make it go, you might as well close the church." That was a heavy responsibility to put on me. But with God's help, I would give it my best.

Here I was ministering to this small group while my heart was in St. Paul, the church of which I was still the pastor. Though I could not be in St. Paul in person, I carried the burden for it and also the struggling work in Saskatoon. I spent much time in fasting and prayer, seeking God's will for my life.

While in the United States I had purchased a new four-door 1930 Chevrolet for 625 dollars from Alice's uncle, who was a car dealer. I used it in Canada, but I ran into a difficulty. I could not drive it unless I paid duty on it—which was no small sum.

I decided to let Brother Dawson take the car back to the States and give it to my fiancee. He also consented to preach at Midway Tabernacle in my absence.

The Lord blessed my efforts during the four months of my stay at Saskatoon. The church was revived; people were baptized and received the Holy Spirit. The people encouraged me to bring my fiancee to Canada, get mar-

ried, and stay for good. I left my case in God's hand and prayed that His will would be done.

During the fall of 1931 I brought Sister Grace Singleton and her workers to Saskatoon for a revival. I had the meetings well advertised for this United States evangelist. We had a great revival.

In December 1931 I received word from the American consul in Regina that my petition to enter the United States had been accepted and that I could return to St. Paul as a permanent resident under a nonquota law as a minister of Midway Tabernacle. I informed the church in Saskatoon as well as Midway of my freedom to return to the States and resume my duties as pastor.

My last Sunday in Saskatoon I was joyful and thankful to God to see two hundred people in attendance. I left Saskatoon in the last week of December to return to St. Paul.

Alice and I were ready to get married. It had been an unusual period for both of us. We set our wedding date of January 13, 1932.

My brother Andrew officiated at our wedding. Herman Nelson, who later became a missionary to China, was our best man and Alice's sister, Esther, was maid of honor. The little flower girl's name was Alice.

Alice was German. Her mother had immigrated to the United States. Her father, also German, was already a citizen of this country. Thus a full-blooded Persian and a full-blooded German made vows to live peaceably and lovingly until death parted us.

I brought my bride to St. Paul, and the church gave us a wonderful reception. I was twenty-six years old and Alice was twenty-one. I had lived in other people's homes

and in hotels for several years. It was good to have a home of my own, even if it was a church apartment.

Midway Tabernacle had quarters for the pastor's family and for the janitor on the second floor.

Some great preachers had pastored this church. Brother Scott was the first pastor and started in a tent meeting. Another pastor was R. E. McAlister.

After four years at Midway the Lord blessed us with a beautiful daughter, Joy Carol. She was born in the same room where Brother and Sister Small's daughter was born. Brother Booth-Clibborn's daughter was also born there. It seems that one of Andrew's daughters had also been born in that upstairs parsonage. It was quite an historical place.

Joy was two weeks older than Ronald Newstrand, whose father was the secretary at that time and took care of the building. He lived in the second part of the second floor in the janitor's quarters.

Alice developed well as a pastor's wife and helper. She was hostess to many evangelists who stayed in our home and sometimes to their wives and children. Right after the wedding we had an evangelistic party of three young men to take care of in our home. Alice adjusted quickly to her role and made them feel welcome in our home.

As a young pastor in St. Paul, I began to have some difficulties with two men of the church. As trouble brewed I was concerned that the work of God might be hindered and a possible split ensue.

I talked to Andrew, who had become a father figure to me. He suggested that, because of my age, I resign rather than enter into the conflict and that I return to evangelistic work for a time. One of the men had been a pastor's

"nightmare" who had created problems for several of Midway's previous pastors.

I wanted to deal with the troublemaker who was persuasive in gathering others sympathetic to his "causes," but Andrew discouraged me. He was not sure what the outcome would be and did not want my ministry to suffer over it. Andrew suggested that Brother S. G. Norris, who was assisting W. T. Witherspoon in Columbus, Ohio, could be introduced to the church.

The church board, wanting to become better acquainted with Brother Norris, decided to ask him to hold a week's meeting.

Brother Witherspoon accompanied him during these services and met with the church board, advising them about Brother Norris and the future of Midway Tabernacle. The church accepted Brother Norris as pastor.

A farewell for us and a welcome service for the Norrises were arranged with Brother Witherspoon present.

One of the first things Brother Norris did when he became pastor was to disfellowship the troublemaking parties, something that was long overdue.

Brother Norris later started Apostolic Bible Institute in the basement of Midway Tabernacle.

Alice, Joy, and I left St. Paul for Berlin, Wisconsin, to spend a few days with Alice's folks before launching into evangelistic work.



Benjamin D. and Alice A. Urshan on their wedding day, January 13, 1932.

Chapter 15

Twenty-Five Years in Duluth

Our first revival meeting after leaving St. Paul was with Brother Witherspoon when the church was located at 44 Hayden Avenue, Columbus, Ohio. Several other doors soon opened for us for revivals in various states.

In January 1936, Alice and I, accompanied by Brother Howard Haney, a gospel singer, held a meeting in St. James, Minnesota. Severe weather tied up our meeting, and for several days we were stranded on a farm with deep snowdrifts and below-zero weather with no way of getting provisions for our needs. The farmer decided to provide us with meat by catching pigeons from his barn loft!

In spite of the severe weather, God blessed us in the revival and several people were converted. Even if only one soul was saved it would have been worth our efforts. How can one estimate the worth of a soul? "What is a man

profited," Jesus asked, "if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26). He said a soul was worth more than the whole world.

From St. James we went to Duluth, Minnesota. When we came down Thompson's Hill into town that wintry day to start a meeting with Brother David Johnson and his assembly, little did we know how many years this city would hold our heartstrings.

Duluth, one of the largest inland ports in the United States, is situated on the northern shore of beautiful Lake Superior, providing a wonderland for winter sports and in the summer excellent fishing and sailing.

We were disappointed that Pastor Johnson was not in town during our revival, but he had gone to North Dakota to hold a meeting. Pastors did this quite often in those days, mixing pastoral work with evangelism. There was a driving impetus to spread the gospel, to reach out to another city.

God gave us a revival and souls were saved. I sang solos and at times, Alice and I sang together. She was a good pianist and a great help to me. One of the songs I sang a lot was "Old-Fashioned Meeting." When I was in Oakland, California, in a meeting with Harry Morse, I heard Herbert Buffum, the great songwriter, sing "When the Lord Got Through with Me." ("He shook me up, He shook me down. . . .") I sang this song too. The crowds increased and the church, located on Fifth Avenue East and Fifth Street, was well filled on many nights. We ministered to people from as far as Hibbing, Superior, and Dairyland, Wisconsin. During these services Brother Johnson sent in his resignation and we assumed the pastorate.

Those first few years in Duluth we faced many hardships and deprivations too many to enumerate. The Depression was still in the land and the people were poor. There were hardly any jobs. People were on welfare, such as it was in those years, eking out a very meager living.

I found a job as a painter, which helped to supplement our income. Some men in the church were painters and they helped me get started. After World War II broke out in September 1939 I got a painting job in the Maritime Shipyards for two and a half years.

We had a setback by losing our church building and had to rent a storefront for several years until we could save enough money to purchase the Seventh-Day Adventist church located at Tenth Avenue East and Sixth Street.

We had some good revivals in this church building with my brothers Joseph and Andrew, the Kinzie evangelistic party, and many other good preachers.

Andrew usually held at least a two-week revival each year in the churches I pastored. It was not unusual for Andrew to call an all-night prayer meeting in his revivals.

In 1948 my brother Timothy and his family came to the United States from Jerusalem. I helped him as much as I could. The Duluth church and I drew up papers to sponsor Timothy and his family and bring them to the States. War had broken out and they had lost their home.

When Timothy and his family arrived, I made appointments to take him on trips to raise funds to go back to other churches. We went to Little Rock, Arkansas, Lake Charles, Louisiana, and all the way through the western part of Florida. Timothy did not drive so I chauffeured him.

On our last trip I saw that he was very ill and needed

medical attention, so his son took Timothy to a hospital. His daughter Mary was with him. I hated to leave, but I needed to get back to the church.

Timothy was in the hospital for quite some time. After an extended illness, Timothy died from a ruptured ulcer in the winter of 1954.

When we first moved to Duluth, a dear brother informed me, "Brother Urshan, God is through with Duluth. This city has had its chance. Some good preachers have come and the people of this city have rejected the truth." I could not accept this evaluation. We rolled up our sleeves and began to work for God. Though we faced many discouragements, we found that God rewards faithfulness.

In spite of the various beliefs among the people regarding tithing, some believing that Christians should not be subject to human government because it was ungodly, I taught the blessings of tithing and supporting God's work. After several years of such preaching and teaching, I saw the assembly come into the unity of faith and the practice of biblical principles. When people learned to be consistent with their giving, not only did the church prosper, but the tithers prospered too. When I came to Duluth only one family owned their own home, but as people began to honor God with their substance they were blessed both spiritually and financially.

When we bought the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, we paid cash for it, and we were able to buy a parsonage, a bus, and a station wagon. We also went on the radio for eight years on the best station in the city, WEBC. There was such a unity of the Spirit that as soon as those seeking the Holy Ghost knelt at the altar, God filled them with His Spirit.

Along with pastoring the Duluth church, I took care of the Kettle River church for five years until they could get a pastor. The work at Kettle River was started with several Polish families. It developed into a stable work.

Winter travel was a problem with heavy snow, icy roads, and hills to climb. Sometimes we had to cancel services at both churches when bad storms came.

Once when we had a bad snowstorm most of the churches were closed, but we kept our church open. One boy braved the weather and came to Sunday school. This boy was so eager to keep his good attendance record that he came out in that terrible weather. He was wet up to his waist! We were impressed!

Early in my ministry I began teaching from large illustrated charts stretched across the platform. Some of the charts were sixteen feet long. Subjects I used included "From Eternity to Eternity," "The Godhead," "The Tabernacle," and prophetical teachings.

In the revivals that I preached, I often used prophecy emphasis and my illustrated charts about once a week. I used them also at times for Bible studies when I pastored.

Sometimes we competed with other churches in Sunday school contests. The Superior church was next largest to ours. When we won a contest between the churches, they served our church a dinner as the prize.

Before we had the Minnesota District camp, we developed a camp at Leisure Lake, Wisconsin. I was one of the sponsors until the district camp was organized. The first one was sponsored by a few churches—Duluth, Superior, Rice Lake, Spooner, and Marionette. It was a start.

My family had grown. After Joy Carol came our sons David Fredrick and then Jonathan Paul (whom we called

Paul). The children were all two years apart. Our home was filled with love and laughter.

Alice was a wonderful mother. She was also a kind and considerate pastor's wife and hostess. She shared with me the responsibility of the Word of God, bearing the burden of God's work in my absences when I ministered in other churches. I could not have married anyone who would have been more loyal to God, our family, and our church family. I have been blessed indeed. I will ever be grateful to Andrew, my matchmaking brother, for encouraging our courtship and marriage.

On one occasion one of the elders said to me, "Brother Urshan, do you realize that you have been here fifteen years and you have not preached one funeral?" We had weddings and babies born but no funerals. I realized that dying was a part of life, but it did seem that God had placed a special blessing upon the church. After all the poverty and hardships the congregation had been through, with hardly enough food to nourish them at times, it was a wonder that we had not lost several people of our congregation.

Andrew and I kept in touch with Narigis, our stepmother in Iran (Persia), sending her money to help supplement her income. After the death march she returned to our old home and lived there for a time. She passed away when she was ninety years old.

In the late 1950s both our sons, Paul and David, decided to enlist in the armed services for a two-year stint. David joined the marines and Paul enlisted in the navy. Both of the boys enrolled in college after the two years were concluded.

During our ministry at Apostolic Church of Duluth,

we had the pleasure of seeing young people get saved and watching them grow up, marry, and have children. Many of them entered the ministry and were used of God to spread the Apostolic message.

Among the young couples I married while at Apostolic Church was Brother and Sister Ernest Maki. They had several boys, some active in the work of the Lord. Their son, Jonathan, has made a fine and well-known evangelist. His wife, Judi, is a Sunday school specialist who conducts seminars. They are kept busy with their ministries.

Three capable assistants or elders as we called them—James Molberg, Ernest Maki, and George Finney—were a tremendous help to me in the Duluth church.

I am not saying that the twenty-five years in Duluth were all rosy. There was opposition and even division at times, but God brought us through it.

Our daughter, Joy, was active in the music program of our church and also in our half-hour radio broadcast over WEBC in Duluth. She attended Apostolic Bible Institute in St. Paul, and she and Virginia Kiefling evangelized for several months in Illinois, Missouri, and Minnesota. Virginia preached and Joy sang. They made a good team. Joy married a young minister, Hillis Cole, and they later pastored a church in Albuqerque, New Mexico, for three years. How we missed Joy's musical ministry in our church!

The Apostolic Church continued to grow and prosper. There were about 100 in the congregation when I assumed this pastorage, and it grew to 200-250 in attendance. A new church was later erected that held 500 people. Many new couples were added to this fellowship, and some of the old-time saints saved under our ministry still remain in the church. All this has proved that God was not

"through" with Duluth as was told us when we first arrived in the city.

In the 1930s the Oneness Pentecostal churches basically affiliated with three main organizations in the United States: the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ, and the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated.

I had credentials with Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ while pastoring in St. Paul and Duluth, Minnesota. I was elected secretary-treasurer of the North District, which was comprised of the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Nebraska. Brother D. D. Dainty of Knoxville, Iowa, was the chairman.

I served as secretary for twelve years, keeping the records and making monthly financial reports. In those days we did not receive remunerations or travel expenses to our conferences or district meetings. Besides these duties I pastored the Duluth church and had the care of the church in Kettle River, Minnesota, for five years. Added to these responsibilities, at times I ministered to a church in Hibbing, Minnesota. There were not enough preachers to go around so we stretched ourselves in several directions, a sort of circuit-riding ministry. The Lord gave us extra strength for our demanding schedules.

As the district grew in churches and ministers, the time came when the brethren in Wisconsin drew up a petition to make Wisconsin a separate district. This took place several years before the merger that formed the United Pentecostal Church. A petition written and signed by most of the Wisconsin pastors was sent to me as secretary to present to the district conference held in Hibbing, Minnesota.

The meeting was presided over by Brother S. G. Norris, who succeeded Brother D. D. Dainty when he passed away. There was strong opposition by the leaders to separating the district. A few years passed and we met again. This time the ministers voted to become a separate district. The district has grown and prospered; many new churches and one of the finest campgrounds in our fellowship have been built.

I believe that we need organization to advance God's cause, but I have not been afraid to speak against politics in religion.

In 1945 the merger of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ and the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated, took place, forming the United Pentecostal Church. This was an answer to prayer, and this move has proven to be blessed of God. I am glad to be a member of this good fellowship, one of the few religious organizations that adheres to the Bible standard of doctrines and holiness.

Chapter 16

Return to Iran

For many years I'd had a longing to return to my native land and preach the gospel to my people. Leaving Iran when I was yet a child, I had not left any spiritual imprint. I prayed that God would make a way for me to return.

After pastoring for twenty-five years in Duluth, the door was open for the gospel in Iran. (Persia had been renamed Iran in 1935.) I had a burning desire to return to the place of my birth and with God's help revive the work Andrew had started.

Alice and I applied for missionary service with the United Pentecostal Church and were approved by the Foreign Missions Division.

Brother Wynn Stairs was the general director of the division, and he did not encourage us to return to Iran at this time. He felt that the missionary effort in Iran and the Middle East was not producing results.

However, we felt such a strong compulsion to go that

we decided to go anyway. Andrew paid my way and Brother Harry Branding of St. Louis paid for my wife's fare.

It was necessary that I have a physical examination before going overseas, and it showed that I had a good-sized ulcer. I submitted to an operation. While in the hospital, one of our ministers visited me, expressing doubt that I would recover enough to go to the mission field.

But two weeks after I got out of the hospital, I saw this brother at a general conference; he could hardly believe that I was the same person. God had indeed given me a speedy recovery. I gained weight and strength and resumed plans for our trip.

On April 20, 1960, Alice and I left Duluth for New York City where we were to board the *SS Queen Mary* for England. By this time Joy had married. Both boys were in college and were taking care of our home. Brother Paul Box, our missionary secretary, arranged our itinerary.

In London we boarded an Australian Qantas plane for Rome, Italy. We got off for a few hours and then continued on to Egypt, landing in Cairo, where we spent a few days visiting historical places. From Cairo we went to Jerusalem, where we spent a week with Brother and Sister Robert McFarland.

While in Jerusalem we met Brother Wynn Stairs and Brother A. T. Morgan, general superintendent of the United Pentecostal Church at this time. We had services in Bethlehem with Sister Margaret Hogg, resident missionary. It was my first time to visit the Holy Land and I was overwhelmed to be able to walk where Jesus walked. The Jordan River where He was baptized, Golgotha, the

tomb, and the upper room all left indelible impressions.

We boarded a United Arab flight to Beirut, Lebanon. We spent two lovely days in Beirut as guests of Pan American. At that time, Beirut was a beautiful city and a center of commerce and international banking with a population of approximately 750,000. It offered both churches and mosques for Christians and Moslems. The city seemed safe at that time for the many tourists.

On May 18, 1960, Alice and I got up early, enjoyed a hearty breakfast at the Excelsior Hotel, and then took a leisurely walk on the blue seashore of the Mediterranean Sea, the world's largest inland sea. Majestic palm trees graced the shoreline. Later as we stood in the pink morning splendor we watched the sun paint its way up the skyline behind our hotel. We then began the last leg of our journey as we boarded a Pan American flight to Teheran, Iran.

It was Alice's first trip to Iran. I had told her so much about it through the years that she was anxious to see my homeland as well as the land of our future field of labor. I had not been there for forty-two years and I was as excited as a child at Christmas! We passed through customs without incident, and as we rode in a taxi to Hotel Jam, my head probably looked as if it were on a swivel. I eagerly looked left and right to see how many places I recognized.

We were served a "delicious" breakfast that featured cow brains. Alice did not know what the breakfast meat was until later when I told her.

Here we were—missionaries to Iran! What to do first? Pray. Everything, we had always found, goes better when prefaced by prayer. Prayer had become as natural as

breathing. After a time in prayer we took a taxi to the home of Brother and Sister Aghajan Abassi and had lunch with them. Their son, Sunvar, drove us to the airport to pick up the rest of our baggage, which included a folding organ for Alice to play in our church services. We again cleared customs and were pleasantly surprised that we had to pay only a small amount of duty. We thanked God for that blessing because clearing customs in Iran and other Middle Eastern countries can be very difficult.

Alice and I decided to spend another day at the hotel to rest up before moving in with the Abassi family until we could find our own place. Our two days at the Hotel Jam cost forty-five dollars, which included our meals.

The group of saints who met together especially for prayer meetings met for worship at 4:00 P.M. each Sunday and Friday. On our first Sunday we visited the Presbyterian church for their morning service and met Dr. W. M. Miller. He generously gave us helpful advice in connection with our mission work and in dealing with the Iranian government.

After our arrival in Iran the United Pentecostal Church Foreign Missions Division sent us a monthly allotment of seventy-five dollars for living expenses and sixty-five dollars for the rental of a large room where we met to worship. From the seventy-five dollars we paid for our utilities, food, and travel expenses, and I also managed to support my co-worker, Brother Nesan, from this fund. For two months we slept on the floor on a mattress until we were able to get army cots. From our personal funds we purchased a small refrigerator, which was a big blessing during the summer months in Iran.

We were also able to set the church in order with the

assistance of Brother Robert McFarland, missionary to Jerusalem at that time.

Brother Polos Nesan, who assisted me in God's work, was a great help to me. He was a capable minister and his wife, Sonya, was a praying woman, whom God used with the gift of prophecy.

Brother Nesan was a linguist who spoke Turkish, Farsi, and Armenian as well as Assyrian and fairly good English. For three months he was our interpreter; I spoke English and he interpreted in Armenian and for our Assyrian people. I had hardly communicated in my native tongue for over forty years and had lost much of it.

During the first three months, I studied the Assyrian language day and night, and with God's help I was able to teach in my native language. The church people were pleasantly surprised that I could do this.

Alice felt a little out of the conversation at times, but after a while she was able to pick up words and get the trend of some of our communications. The people loved Alice.

She had an opportunity to teach English at the American Iranian Society, which was composed of some twenty-five Iranian students and military personnel. On one occasion, she was trying to describe tomatoes in English and they did not understand, but when she told them they were "bodom johnnies," which are tomatoes in Farsi and Assyrian, they understood and laughed.

During the harvest season Brothers Nesan and Abassi accompanied Alice and me to Urmia and other towns. Going to Urmia stirred up poignant memories of the months our family stayed with Uncle Badal during the Turk-Kurd-Moslem attacks. The loss of my mother while we were

holed up in Urmia awaiting the return of our home still brought tears to my eyes as hoards of vivid memories returned.

On one occasion I was invited to speak to the large congregation of the Assyrian Presbyterian Church. Many Armenians, Assyrians, and Christian Iranians attended. In order to address such a mixed crowd, I preached in English and Dr. Miller interpreted in Farsi, which most of the people understood. The Lord gave me good freedom in preaching about God's visitation to all nations as recorded in Act 10 when Peter preached to the household of Cornelius. I felt that I was well received.

I had been away from the Iranian culture for so many years that I had to concentrate on observing the proper etiquette at times. For instance, when talking to a man whose wife was standing by him, I was expected to address the man and, in essence, ignore the wife. One of their sayings is, "A woman should ask her husband three times each day: what to say, what to think, and what to do." In Iran, women's rights are several centuries in arrears. A woman is treated as an inferior being.

In that culture a man never shakes a woman's hand. If the woman is European or American trained, she may offer her hand and this is acceptable.

Iranian men are very protective of their wives (and perhaps also unusually jealous). A stranger does not take photos of Moslem women. Their husbands can become very irate and may even harm the photographer.

A woman does not go shopping alone. If another woman goes with her, it is acceptable. One Armenian woman, Sarah, was on her way to church and carrying her Bible. She was arrested and interrogated for the bet-

ter part of a day for being on the street alone.

The more religious Moslem women wear traditional black chadors. These veils are usually made from a very large piece of black cloth (sometimes about eight yards of it) that covers the whole body. It is draped over the shoulders and arms, wrapping around them and covering their legs. The chador is secured over the head, across the forehead to cover all the hair, draped over the mouth, and held in place by the teeth. Only the eyes and nose show.

Whenever women go outside the home, they must wear the veil. They wear them also inside their homes, especially when visitors are present. Only in the private quarters of their homes do they feel at liberty to remove them.

Other less orthodox Moslem women also wear veils but wear lighter solid colors or veils with floral patterns, and ones that do not cover the whole body. They still cover all their hair but attach the veils under their chins.

Young girls are required to wear veils but often toss them in a heap as they need more freedom to play.

The Christian Assyrian women also wear veils. It is a part of their culture, and they blend better with society by wearing them.

In 1936 Reza Shah abolished the veil for those who chose not to wear them. But when the shah was dethroned, more Iranian women wore veils than before it was abolished.

Alice wore a scarf on her head when she was in church services.

Some of the native Christians told one missionary, "You will be better accepted if you do not let your wife have a big say in your affairs." Missionaries must be

aware of cultural differences and work with them as much as they are conscientiously able so they can make inroads and be effective for the gospel's sake.

While in Urmia, we visited the ancient church known to Assyrians as Mot Maryum or the Church of Old Saint Mary. Part of the church was built deep in the ground. Another one has been built almost on top of it. Going down to the old part one sees two tombstones. The priest told us that the stones marked the graves of the two wise men who went to see the baby Jesus, king of the Jews. When asked why there weren't three stones he said the Moslems stole the marker of the third wise man. So the two markers are carefully protected.

I had the pleasure of preaching in the evangelical church in Urmia and also in the town of Ada, where the Holy Ghost first fell when Andrew preached there and also the place of the first (to our knowledge) Pentecostal martyr.

On that day the church bells rang and people filled the church. One person received the Holy Ghost as we stood and worshiped God. My cousin, Benjamin, joined Alice and me as we visited Abajaloo, my old homeplace. I wept as I looked upon the place of my birth, now almost entirely in ruins. Trunks of beautiful aspen trees lay in the yard. This was the place of many wonderful early childhood memories with my parents and brothers. It was a normal and peaceful time before the awful storm.

"Look! There's the grape vineyard! In the same place it was when we lived here!" I said.

"It may be the same vines your father planted!" Cousin Benjamin said. "Some vines live for fifty or more years."

I examined the ripened grapes and wanted to eat some, but my cousin said, "You'd better not eat any of these. You no longer own this ground. The Moslems have taken it and would not like it if you ate their grapes. I have a vineyard and you can eat all the grapes you want from it."

That nice village of Abajaloo with its homes, orchards, and vineyards had been taken over by the Moslems with the exception of just a few plots of land inhabited by my relatives who returned after the death marches.

I later heard that the old home place had been razed, the bricks hauled off, and the ground plowed up.

In the 1960s the country was peaceful under Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. Most of the Assyrian Christians had moved to larger cities such as Urmia, Tabriz, Shiraz, Esphahan, and the capital, Teheran, and were doing well in business. They had their own schools and churches.

As I was an American citizen, the Iranian embassy in Washington granted me a twelve-month visa to Iran. During that time I not only tried to renew my visa but I also considered applying for permanent residence. Strangely, I ran into difficulty because of having been born there. You see, the "laws of the Medes and Persians" never change. Once born in that country a person is still considered its citizen.

The authorities kept me in turmoil. I was given an additional six-month visa, a total of eighteen months to stay. Iran demanded that I take an Iranian passport if I wanted to stay. The American consulate advised me not to submit to their demands as it might jeopardize my American citizenship. We had no alternative but to leave the country; however, I was able to appoint Brother

Ishmael Adams to take my place. I left all the furniture in our residence to him.

During our eighteen months in Iran I tried to secure a permanent place of worship for our believers. Brother Ephraim Joseph had a nice place to worship. Before our coming to Teheran, the Assemblies of God group met there. The building also had comfortable living quarters, and we could have purchased it for 25,000 dollars. We had 3,000 dollars on hand already, which was given to my brother, Andrew, for this purpose.

We asked Brother Stairs, the missionary director, for permission to make an appeal to American churches for funds to secure this place for a permanent headquarters for our work. We received a negative response. He wrote back, "We did not send you there to buy buildings, just to preach in the streets, under the trees, in homes, etc." A year or so later we learned that the building we had wanted to purchase for 25,000 dollars had increased to 100,000 dollars in value.

There is a saying among our people, "A bird without a nest is a vagabond." Another denomination provided their workers with a permanent place of worship, and the people are still there, while most of our people have scattered.

God later laid a burden upon Brother and Sister James Wood to go to Iran. They were doing well until war broke out and they had to leave the country.

Iran has an area of 630,000 square miles, rich in oil and other minerals. Its population had increased to more than forty million. The overthrow of the shah was a tragedy for the Christians. The country is now ruled by the mullahs, the fanatical Shiite Moslems, and recently was in

an extended state of war with Iraq, a neighboring Moslem country.

While Alice and I were in Iran, Andrew decided to visit us. He applied for a visa in San Francisco. Upon hearing of Andrew's plan to go by way of New York, the consulate said that it would mail his visa.

When Andrew arrived in New York the consulate there told him that the visa had not arrived. Since he was sure to get it, they told him to go on to Beirut and it would be sent there.

In Beirut, Andrew waited a month or more. Still the visa did not come.

I tried to help him from Teheran but could not manage to get through the Iranian red tape. I even obtained help from an attorney who "needed money" to pay the officials. Even that failed, so Andrew returned to the States. A few months later he succeeded in coming to Iran, but we were not able to wait for him. I was disappointed that we were not able to be there at the same time.

Andrew's visit to Iran was good and his ministry was a blessing for that short time he was able to stay. While he was there, our local Assyrian pastor, Ishmael Adam, died of a heart attack. Andrew officiated at his funeral, which was held in the Presbyterian church.

We left Iran in 1962 for Tel Aviv, Israel. We were there a few days before flying to the United States via Germany and France. After a flight from Paris to New York on Pan American we saw the lights of New York Harbor. As we left the plane, I felt like kissing the ground of this wonderful and free country.

Here I was, back to start again. Where to go from here, evangelize or pastor?

Alice and I spent a few days in New York at 296 West 92nd Street, where we had once lived for three months when Andrew pastored there.

We then headed toward Ohio and Indiana for a few short meetings before returning to our home in Duluth. It was good to see our children again and sleep in our own bed.

We spent the rest of the summer in evangelistic meetings as doors opened. In the fall of 1962, two churches in Wisconsin were open for pastors. After much prayer we accepted the call to Apostolic Gospel Church in Clintonville.

We enjoyed working with the saints of that city for four years and had some wonderful times. We had a gospel program on the radio at different times. Sister Charlotte, a former Catholic nun, was with us for a meeting, and we had overflow crowds each night. Brother Andrew Smith followed in a campaign and was on the radio each day. He certainly preached the Apostolic message beautifully.

Chapter 17

Pastoring in Albuquerque

In the spring of 1966 we received a call to pastor Bethel Pentecostal Church of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Thirty-six years prior to this time I had held a revival in this church when I was a single evangelist. Now at age sixty I was back. I felt that I had several more years to give pastoral work.

This church had a rich history, having begun in 1926 when Calvin Longstreet and J. J. Munday held evangelistic services in a small mission hall on South Broadway. Pastors who have pastored Bethel include Samuel C. McClain, Dale Stubble, Ralph Glasgow, W. H. Massengale, L. M. Brown, Chester Hatcher, T. J. Miller, Robert Wolfe, and Hillis Cole.

The church had just completed the building of a nice parsonage and had added some Sunday school rooms, so they were heavily in debt. There were about seventy-five

people in the congregation at that time.

I decided to secure a job at the Kirkland Air Force Base for several months to help the church make its payments. After six months I quit my job at the base and the church started making peanut brittle to raise funds.

We made peanut brittle by the hundreds! We bought sugar five and six hundred pounds at a time and peanuts from Portales in great quantities.

We cooked four pots of brittle at a time. I was the spreader who shook the bubbles out. We had an assembly-line production.

One of our biggest sales was at the state fair. It took two months of preparation for this. We loaded up the van and had two people handing it out. People stood in line to get it. We averaged five thousand dollars in profit per year selling the candy at the fair for seven years.

We also sold peanut brittle at the schools so pupils could resell it and make a profit to buy uniforms or use for other school projects. Several neighboring churches bought wholesale from us.

We purchased two buses, bought beautiful drapes and carpet for the church, and paid off the church debt of thirty-five thousand dollars with the sale of peanut brittle. God bless all those peanut brittle makers! God surely has a special reward in store for them.

On October 16, 1967, Andrew, my beloved brother and mentor, went to be with the Lord in Bay City, Texas. Andrew had preached forty-seven years to thousands of people. There is no way of knowing how many people received the Holy Spirit under his ministry. Before he died, he told his son, Nathaniel, "Death is not important. The work of God is the most important thing."

Often in his meetings, even as Andrew grew older, he would lay hands on people and personally pray for as many as two hundred people in one service. At eighty-three, I think Andrew just wore himself out. He was like a patriarch—everyone wanted him to pray a blessing on them. He loved to see people liberated in the Spirit.

Andrew's youngest child, Andy, had preceded him in going to glory. Andy was stricken with infantile paralysis as a two-year-old and partially recovered. Later the doctor told the family that Andy had muscular dystrophy and would likely die in his teens. He lived until he was twenty-two.

Andrew's son Nathaniel had developed into a very able minister, evangelizing with his wife, Jean. As a young minister, in 1949 he assumed the pastorate at Calvary Tabernacle in Indianapolis. It pleased Andrew that the ministerial torch was passed on to his son. Years later it was passed on to Nathaniel's two sons.

Josephus was dead, then Timothy—and now Andrew was gone. Only one of my brothers was left, Joseph, who was pastoring in Dunnellon, Florida.

The church in Albuquerque grew in attendance. About two hundred persons were baptized while I pastored Bethel. We bused people in, had contests to promote Sunday school growth, and knocked on doors all over our area.

Brother and Sister Lonnie Burton, fresh from Conqueror's Bible College in Portland, Oregon, came to work with me. They were dedicated workers. As my assistant, Lonnie Burton was a tremendous help to me working with the Spanish segment of our community. He was able to preach in Spanish.

Brother Craig Stallard was another capable assistant

at Bethel for four years. He worked side by side with me as I visited the sick and went on Sunday school visitation and he filled in wherever he was needed.

The church was near an army base, and the wife of a serviceman began to attend our services and showed some interest. God dealt with her about being baptized.

One night while we were praying at the altar, this woman's husband walked into the church in a rage, intent on harming whoever was responsible for the change that had come over his wife. I was praying at the altar with seekers. When I looked up I noticed a commotion in the back of the church.

Sister Urshan was trying to talk the serviceman out of causing trouble. I went back to investigate. Between Sister Urshan and me—and the Lord—we managed to cool his temper. We encouraged the man to kneel and pray. "Let us pray with you," Sister Urshan suggested. Scarcely had he knelt when the Spirit of God began to move upon him. He began to weep. The Lord convicted him of his evil intentions and his sinful condition. He confessed what he had planned to do and asked forgiveness of the person who had been witnessing to his wife.

A few days later this man and his wife were baptized and both of them received the Holy Spirit. This was a miracle of salvation!

This couple grew in the Lord and became effective soulwinners. Later when they were transferred to another base where there was no church of our faith, they wrote, asking us to send someone to open a church in that community.

Although the main focus of my ministry was preaching the gospel and endeavoring to win souls, we had heal-

ing miracles from time to time. One case involved a Spanish lady.

Sister Montoya was dying with cancer. She'd had treatments that caused her hair to fall out. One day when we visited her she said, "The nurse told me today that I don't have many more days left. She thought it would be wise for me to make arrangements for my funeral."

Sister Urshan and I knelt on each side of her bed and held her hands. "Let's agree in prayer that God will heal you," I said as I anointed her with oil in Jesus' name. Then we prayed.

In a few days she was out of bed and feeling much better and her strength returned. Sister Montoya testified to God's healing power. This occurred several years ago, and at this writing she is still alive.

While pastoring in Albuquerque I was appointed to serve on the Word Aflame curriculum committee, which develops outlines for Sunday school literature. This committee meets twice a year at World Evangelism Center in Hazelwood, Missouri.

We were in Albuquerque during the time the hippies roamed the country trying to find the meaning of life. Large numbers of them came to New Mexico because they liked the weather. There were several coffee houses in our city provided by churches in an effort to reach them with the gospel.

I visited these coffee houses and managed to have some Bible studies and discussions with some of these young people. As a result, a group of about ten or twelve of them came to our services on one of our buses.

We had an old-time Pentecostal worship service and altar call. Most of these young people responded and

showed definite signs of repentance. After Brother William Sciscoe and I explained the plan of salvation and the need for water baptism, nine of them were baptized and several received the Holy Ghost.

This very first service these young people attended bore fruit of lasting results. There were noticeable spiritual changes in their lives. And there were physical changes too. Some of the boys got haircuts and some shaved off their ragged beards. One young man admitted, "The reason I had long hair and a beard and dressed so sloppy is because I was rebellious, and I flaunted it like it was a medal of honor."

I kept in touch with some of these young people and was happy to learn that the wonderful changes the gospel had produced in them continued to help several of them to become stable Christians.

A lady and her two teenage children started attending our services. As the Lord began to deal with them about salvation, they prayed at the altar and surrendered their lives to Jesus. Upon arising from the altar they requested to be baptized.

On the night of the baptismal service quite a group of the lady's friends and relatives were present even though it was not a regular service night.

I spent some time before the baptismal service explaining the plan of salvation and the part that water baptism in the name of Jesus and the infilling of the Holy Spirit played in it.

Although those baptized did not receive the Holy Ghost that night, they were blessed with the joy of the Lord.

Later, the assistant pastor told me that among the

group that night was Mike Farrell, one of the actors on the TV program MASH. He was a brother-in-law to the lady who was baptized.

I was pleased that even though I did not know it at the time, I'd had a chance to share the simple gospel message of salvation with Mike Farrell, as well as with the others present. It is our duty and privilege to sow the gospel seed whenever and wherever we can. What people do with it is their responsibility.

On January 13, 1982, Alice and I were married fifty years. Our children and grandchildren came for our golden wedding celebration. There was Joy Carol and her husband, Steve Tschawuschian from California with Trey, Benjamin, and Patrick; our son David with his wife, Lynda, and their children David, Casey, and Daniel from Minnesota; and our son Paul and his wife, Dotti, with their children Lisa, Joy, Ross, and Jonathan from Florida.

Joy and her husband were in real estate; David was a salesman for the Worthington Pump Company in Duluth; and Paul worked with Mobil Oil Company in Orlando, Florida.

There was a dinner in the fellowship hall followed by a celebration with members of the family and friends participating. The Sunday services at eleven o'clock and seven o'clock were also an extension of the golden wedding celebration, with Pastor James Jordan from Borger, Texas, preaching at both services. He also served as master of ceremonies.

It was a time of warm remembrances. God had brought us through so many varied experiences in those fifty years!

We pastored Bethel Church until April 23, 1983. The

congregation had grown in the sixteen and one-half years we were there and I felt good about leaving. During our pastorate we were able to burn both the church and parsonage mortgages and we had saved a good sum of money in the church treasury. I was seventy-seven years old and still in good health, so I had plans to keep active with preaching and teaching.

The church had set up a retirement fund for me a few years before I retired, and several years prior to this I had purchased a home for the time I would no longer use the parsonage. These two benefits would help me cope with the reduced retirement income ahead.

Brother Dennis Witkus from Wisconsin was voted in as the new pastor of Bethel.

Chapter 18

Back to Eversley

As a generous retirement gift, Bethel Church presented Alice and me with an all-expense-paid trip to England. Nothing could have pleased me more. I was excited about seeing the old neighborhood of Eversley, as well as the Thompsons' son, Norris, daughter, Pauline, and their spouses.

Both Brother and Sister Thompson had long ago passed away. Norris and his wife, Marion, lived in Pewsey, England, while Pauline and her husband, Harry Sellings, lived in the quaint little town of Honiton.

So many years had passed since I had lived with the Thompsons. Although I was aware when I was with them that the Thompsons were kind to me, like most teenagers, at the time I did not fully comprehend the extent of their selflessness. But it did not take long for realization to dawn when I came to Canada and the United States and was on my own.

I had been in touch with the family through the years,

and in a letter to Pauline I inquired, "Will you be able to pick us up at the train depot? Alice and I would love to visit with you and maybe we could see the old neighborhood—and perhaps even Eversley."

A letter came right back from Pauline. "I would be delighted to see you and Alice. My husband and I will be glad to pick you up at the depot and escort you around to some favorite places. As you probably know, the old homeplace was sold after our parents died. A doctor and his family live there now. I know them and will ask if they'd mind giving us a tour of Eversley."

Upon arriving and being met by the Sellings, we had a lovely dinner with Pauline and Harry. Their spacious home was flanked by a gorgeous array of flowers and well-manicured gardens. Pauline had a flair for grouping the perfect kinds and colors of flowers together to create a feast for one's eyes. There were so many things to talk about that the evening passed all too quickly.

We spent one evening with Norris and Marion in Pewsey and enjoyed another fine meal served in formal English style. In the course of the conversation I asked, "Norris, do you remember that little Persian rug I hand-carried from Bombay to England and gave to your folks?"

A slow smile spread across Norris's face. "Yes, I remember it well. By the way, let's go upstairs. I have something I want to show you."

We climbed the staircase to the second floor and entered a bedroom. Pointing to the floor at the end of the bed, Norris asked, "Does this look familiar?"

The gift rug! The shades of blues and deep reds may have faded some in sixty or more years, but it was still in good condition.

"When Mother and Father passed away, I inherited this rug when their estate closed."

I stooped and felt the rug's texture, lifting a corner to see the tight rows of hand-tied knots. The nostalgia of the moment made my eyes mist with tears as scenes of a bewildered Persian lad with language and traveling problems making his way to England with that rug rolled up under his arm and a suitcase in the other flashed through my mind.

As Pauline and Harry drove us through the old neighborhood, pockets of memories were tucked away at every turn. I'd tell Alice, "Here's the hill where I ran into that old fellow when I couldn't stop my bicycle . . . here's the grocery store . . . the church we attended." Many things were amazingly unchanged; other familiar places were torn down and new houses and businesses had replaced them.

We pulled up to Eversley. Sixty years had naturally aged it some, but it was such a well-built home that it had not changed much. It was very recognizable. We walked up the steps to the door. I was in a dreamlike state. Who would have thought that I'd get to return to this special place in my life!

The doctor's wife let us in. Though the interior had changed with the new owner's furniture and decor, it had a familiar feeling. The massive staircase leading to the second floor was as beautiful as ever. Room by room flooded me with vivid memories . . . of family devotions . . . of homework . . . of delicious meals served . . . of being loved and cared for.

We went on up to the servants' quarters on the third floor and then back down to the second floor where I'd

had a bedroom on the same floor as the Thompson family. I lingered in "my" room a bit as the rest were chattering and moving on. Poignant feelings flooded my emotions. This had been my private place where I could be alone with my thoughts. This was the room in which I read the letter from Andrew about Josephus's untimely death and lay across the bed and wept. Getting one last look, I reluctantly left the room, knowing that I would likely never see it again. God had allowed me this sentimental flashback. I had come a full circle. How good He had been to me and how many things He had brought me through!

We had a wonderful time seeing the special attractions in England, but seeing Eversley again was the highlight of the trip for me.

Several months after we returned home, my brother Joseph, at age eighty-two and still actively pastoring, went to be with the Lord. His ministry had spanned the length and breadth of the United States. He'd founded the church in Dunnellon, Florida, in 1969, where he pastored until his last days.

His eulogy in one church publication read: "Joseph D. Urshan is survived by his loving wife, Ila; a son, Timothy (also a minister); a daughter, Adel; four grandchildren; and two great grandchildren."

As I read the tribute, mentally I added, "and is survived by one brother, Benjamin David Urshan."

Appendix A

History and Geography of My Birthplace

The geography and the inhabitants of my birthplace are ably described by an Assyrian native, Yonan H. Shabez, a Baptist minister. The material in this appendix is quoted from his book, *The Rage of Islam*, third edition, Judson Press, copyright 1918, with a few minor changes of form.

* * * * * *

The Urmia Plain, the district in which the occurrences herein related took place, occupies a central-western position, on an elevated plateau, in the province of Azerbaijan, northwestern Persia (modern Iran). The region was once called by the natives Darel-Safa, "A Gate of Pleasure," and has often been named by American and European travelers "The Paradise of Persia." It deserves the title, for it is a fair stretch of level land, sixty miles long and thirty miles wide in its extreme dimensions. It is covered from end to end with fields of grain, orchards,

vineyards, and beautiful gardens, and dotted over with a thousand towns and villages, with the city of Urmia as its central figure.

To the west this level expanse is bounded by the Kurdish mountains of eastern Turkey, spurs of which extend on the north and the south, eastward, thus shutting in the level land. Its eastern boundary is Lake Urmia, a body of water about ninety miles in length by thirty miles in extreme width. This body of water is at least as salty as the Dead Sea. The lake is devoid of fish, but its banks are so frequented by wild fowl, especially duck and flamingo, that the shores are often whitened for miles by their presence. The varieties of trees provide all kinds of fruit. Water is in abundance throughout the region.

The staple products are wheat, rice, cotton, maize, beans, barley, most delicious melons, gourds, potatoes, carrots, turnips, beets, capsicum, chilis, brinjals, ladyfingers, castor oil (for burning), madder, salsify, scorzonera, celery, oil seeds of various sorts, opium, and tobacco.

The orchards are full of trees which merit the title of "noble." Noble, indeed, are the walnuts, and beautiful are the apricots, apples, peaches, pears, and plums. The vineyards with their thirty-five or forty different varieties of grapes, their foliage like that of the deciduous trees, pass away in scarlet and gold in season when nature has perfected her work and rests. It is autumn in its glory, but without its gloom.

About ten miles from Lake Urmia, and two miles from the spurs and foothills of the mountains to the westward, lies the city of Urmia. This metropolis was known as the ancient Thebarma, the birthplace, as tradition has it, of

Zoroaster, the founder of the ancient sect of fire-worshipers; a tradition rendered more credible, perhaps, from the fact that there are, on different parts of the plain, a number of artificial mounds, each covering a large area, and rising to a height of a hundred feet or more. These are vast piles of ashes, from sacrificial and funeral fires, accumulated during the lapse of centuries under the perpetual fires before which the Zoroastrians made adoration. This, at least, is the explanation given by the Persian people for the presence of these monuments. The town of Gogtapa is built in part upon the slope of one of these ash-hills.

Urmia is surrounded by a thousand towns and villages scattered about the plain in every direction. There are practically no shops or bazaars in any of these minor towns; consequently, the inhabitants obtain their supplies of almost every description from the city, which, with its numerous large markets and bazaars, is amply able to satisfy the wants and needs of all.

There being no railroads, no tram lines, few carriages or carts, most of the people walk to the city from their respective dwellingplaces, often two or three days' foot journey distance. On every road or trail one sees a continuous procession of camels, donkeys, mules, horses, and pedestrians coming to or going from the city, animals and people alike loaded with merchandise of every description. Those bound for the market are laden with the products of the country—fruit, fuel, vegetables, carpets, foodstuffs, etc. Those traveling homeward bear their purchases from the bazaars. One sees, also, long caravans of horses, mules, or camels, which take the place of freight trains. These caravans bring to Urmia the products of

European and of Oriental lands, consigned to the merchants and traders of the city.

The population of Urmia proper is estimated at about one hundred thousand. The city is more than four miles in circumference, and, like other cities of Persia, is surrounded by a mud wall about fifty feet in average height, with several large towers. This wall is pierced by seven gates. Most of the houses are built of unburned brick. The streets are wider than is common in Eastern towns, and there is an agreeable air of comfort enhanced by the great prodigality of beautiful shade trees about the grounds surrounding the dwellings.

This is the section of the country that was attacked by the Turks and Kurds in 1914. This beautiful plateau, two thousand square miles of garden and vineyard, village and towns, with a bustling city as its center, prosperous and thriving, supporting an industrious population, a considerable percentage of the Christian faith, where forethought, good example, and honorable dealing on the part of the latter for more than a generation had produced, first, toleration, and later, respect from their Mohammedan [Moslem] neighbors, rested at the beginning of the year in a profound peace. No thought of the clash of arms in Europe disturbed its apparent security. Scarcely one of its inhabitants was aware of the far-reaching, insidious propaganda of the remote government of the Huns [Germans].

The frowning heights of the Kurdistan Mountains were a constant reminder of the proximity of those nomadic Kurdish tribes—bloodthirsty, cruel, conscienceless—occupying the hills to the west. The outrages and massacres of former years were not forgotten, but there

was no anticipation of a repetition of those horrors of the past. Why should there be? The hundreds of thousands who tilled the soil, trafficked, bought and sold, and enjoyed the pleasures and products of this rich and fertile land, where fruits and flowers grew and blossomed in greatest abundance and prodigality, heard but the faintest echo of the thunders of war, far, far away.

The Earlier Inhabitants

Such knowledge as we possess of the earlier Persians is almost entirely derived from philological research, and from Zend-Avesta, the sacred book of the Zoroastrian religion professed by the Persians up to the time of the Mohammedan conquest in the seventh century of our era. The Avesta tells us scarcely anything in relation to Zoroaster; and the traditions regarding him, preserved by classical writers, are not to be relied on. He seems to have flourished about 600 B.C. and to have been a religious reformer seeking to purify the ancient Aryan faith from the corruptions inducted into it by either the Scythians or the Assyrians.

Zoroastrianism is a dualism, the supreme good deity being Hormuzd, and the evil spirit Ahriman. Great importance is attached to fire, which is described as the son of Hormuzd and the most powerful antagonist of Ahriman. The adoration of fire as a symbol, at a later period, under the influence of the Magi of Media, priests of the old Scythian nature-worship, led to the "fireworship" which is popularly identified with Zoroaster. But not without a struggle. The favor shown by Cyrus to the Jews is attributed by some to his faith in one God, in contrast with the idolatry of Babylon. The usurper, Gomates, a Magian

priest who succeeded Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, abolished the Persian cult and substituted the firealtars of the Magi; and he it was who reversed the policy of Cyrus toward the Jews, and forbade the building of the temple (Ezra 4).

But the two religions seem gradually to have coalesced; and fire-worship is perpetuated to this day in the ritual of the Parsees of Bombay, the chief modern representatives of Zoroastrianism.

This cult, which the kings of the Sassanian dynasty raised to its highest level of power, was in its turn swept away by the Mohammedan conquest in the seventh century. From that time to the present Persia has been a Mohammedan country. There are now no more than fifteen thousand Zoroastrians in the country [in 1918], most of them in or near the town of Yezd. In India there are at present one hundred thousand Parsees, nearly all of whom live in Bombay.

The Mohammedans (Moslems)

There are two powerful sects of the followers of Mohammed: the Sunnis, or orthodox party, who hold that the first three caliphs, Abu-Bekr, Omar, and Osman, rightfully succeeded Mohammed; and the Shiahs, who believe that Ali, who married Mohammed's daughter, Fatima, was the prophet's legitimate successor, and that the three caliphs mentioned, who held the reins of power after Mohammed's death, and for a long time kept Ali from the caliphate, were usurpers. The Shiahs also claim that Hussain and Hassan, the sons of Ali, who were killed while fighting for their rights, were martyrs. The Persian Mohammedans are Shiahs, and go on pilgrimages to the

tombs of Ali and his sons at Nedjef and Kerbala, in the Euphrates valley.

But most of the nomads, found in the northern provinces of Persia, the Kurds of the western provinces, and the Turks and Arabs are Sunnis, as are the majority of Mohammedans throughout the world.

The Kurds

[At this time the Kurds were] shedders of blood, raisers of strife, seekers after turmoil and uproar . . . but a brave race and fearless, of a hospitality grateful to the soul. In truth and in humor unequaled, of pleasing countenance and fair cheek, boasting of all goods of beauty and grace.

Kurdistan, their country, is one of those names which you may find on the map without any dotted lines or other marks to define their boundaries. The word simply means "country of the Kurds."

The Kurds are very little known; within recent years they have probably never come before the eyes of the world except . . . by peering out from impregnable mountain fastnesses and carrying destruction before them; slaying Christians; resisting all efforts by princes or powers to subdue or even coerce them.

Of their origin less is known than any other race in the East. Some historians think that they are descended from the ancient Medes, but we know only that the Medes were swallowed up by the Persians and lost their nationality; and we know no more of them.

The Persian legend has it that the Kurds are the descendants of those young men who were saved from the voracity of the infernal serpent offspring of the monster

Zohek, of Persian mythology. These serpents were fed upon human brains at the devil's suggestion, and were deceived by having the brains of goats substituted for those of the two youths who were to become progenitors of the Kurdish race. Another and less-known legend is that Solomon sent for four hundred virgins from the East; these virgins were deflowered by the devils, and the offspring were called Kurds.

These nomadic people are undoubtedly the Carduchi of Xenophon, mentioned in the retreat of the ten thousand, and have remained in a condition of semi-independence from the earliest time. Living on the borders of Persia and Turkey, they are in subjection to neither government, and can as occasion requires, for purposes of either plunder or of escape from punishment, move quickly from one territory to the other. There are two divisions of Kurds; some are permanent dwellers in towns and villages; others live in the villages during the winter and roam the mountains with their flocks and herds the remainder of the year.

Their language is akin to the Persian; it is rarely written, the Persian being the literary language of the Kurds of Persia; the Arabic, or Osmanli Turkish, the tongue of those living in Turkey. Few of them can either read or write. There are a number of dialectical differences corresponding to the separate districts. Most of the Kurds are shepherds, although some are farmers by occupation and warriors by profession. Yet a few live in the larger towns, such as Souj-Boulak, Sena, and other cities, and are engaged in merchandising and the trades.

The Massacre of 1914

The summer of 1914 will never be forgotten as one of the most prosperous for the Christians. It was a time of utmost quiet and peace. The people everywhere went about their accustomed tasks without being molested. They planted new vineyards and orchards, planned new buildings, new homes, expecting fully that the era of prosperity would continue. They knew nothing whatever of the storm that was gathering in darkening and threatening form. Soon the clouds would twist and writhe, discharge their lightnings upon this plain of peace until a hurricane of horrors would harrow it, a hurricane which was to destroy hundreds of towns and villages, while thousands of people were to be massacred in cold blood, and other thousands of women and little children starved to death.

On the twenty-fourth of February came the news of a most hellish massacre at Goolpashan, a Christian town. I doubt whether this tragedy has a parallel in any history. At the time of the attack upon Goptapa, Goolpashan, located three miles to the northeast, was greatly upset. That town was supposed to be the wealthiest place, for its size, in the district. A group of its most prominent people went to the Turkish officials and Kurdish chiefs and paid them a large sum of money to keep their place safe. Several Turkish soldiers were sent to protect it. Meanwhile I [Reverend Shabez] had written to a number of friends there, and to most of our church members, for we had a flourishing Baptist church in Goolpashan, asking them not to remain there, but to come to Urmia and abide with us. But they assured me that everything was all right, that a German agent there, Herr Neumann, whose

wife had relatives in the town, was personally interested in the protection of its inhabitants. He would look out for their safety. Nevertheless I wrote again saying, "If you don't come yourselves, at least send on your wives and children." A few did so, but the majority remained in Goolpashan. As a matter of fact several of our Goptapa people thought that Goolpashan was a safer place than Urmia.

Well, things were quiet enough for a time, but on the night of February twenty-fourth, a body of Kurds, Turks, and local Persian Mohammedans entered the town. The Turkish police began to resist their entry; these policemen were thereupon called aside and cajoled by the intruders; and shortly afterward they left the precincts.

The Turks and Kurds then came on to the city square and called upon all the men to meet them for a discussion, as they were there to protect them and their families. Since, therefore, the newcomers meant to look out for their safety, it was only right that they, the new protectors, should be paid for their service. They were going farther south, they said, to fight, and asked each one to pay a certain amount. This was the first move; they drained the inhabitants of practically their last cent.

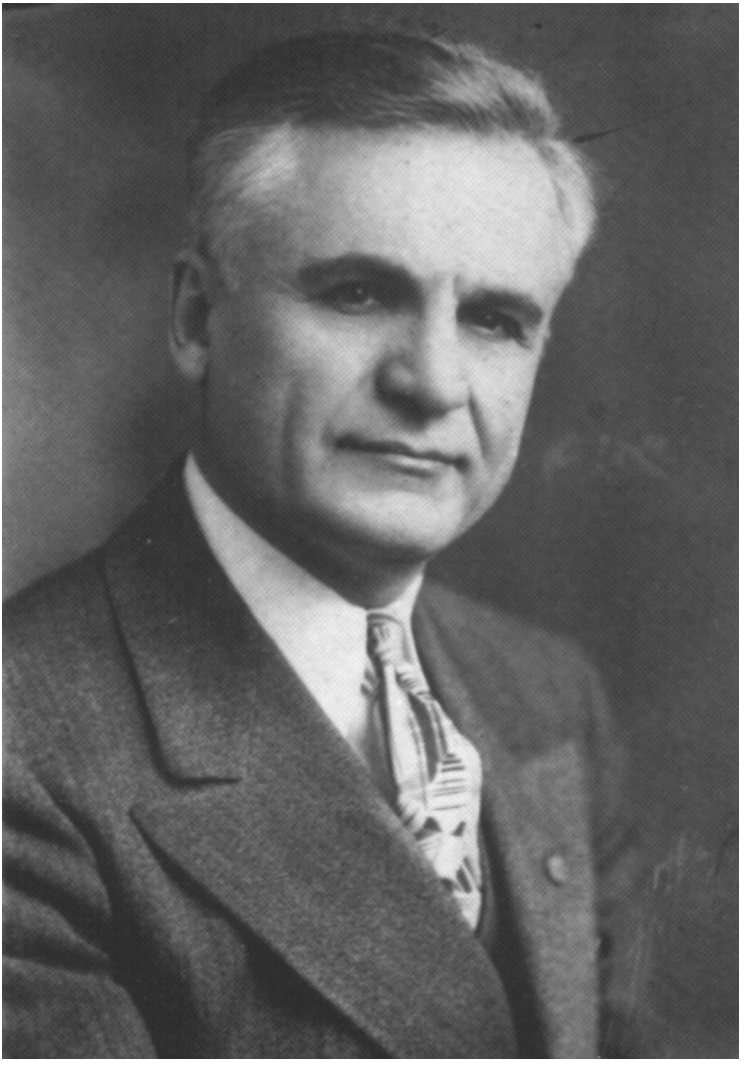
"Now," said they, "we are in need of ropes for various purposes connected with war. Bring us what you can." A great quantity of rope was immediately furnished them. Then, with the aid of their rifles, the fiends herded the unarmed innocents in the center of the square, from which escape was made impossible, and bound their victims' hands behind their backs.

They next drove them into a graveyard about half a mile outside the town and shot and killed every single

one. Then the bloodthirsty butchers returned, this time to wreak their will upon the defenseless women.

What a black story is this! My pen trembles in my hand, and my eyes are dimmed as I write it.

It was night. All the women and girls, some of the latter but seven or eight years old, were most barbarously treated. Little children though they were, many died that night at the hands of these monsters. Those of the women who thought it possible, tried to escape to Goptapa. Naturally they dared not follow the straight path, where they would be sure to meet people, so made their way through rough country and swamps, finally reaching a small Mohammedan village, where they begged for shelter and protection, but were promptly refused both. After they had gone, scores of men disguised themselves, took a shortcut, headed off the women, captured them, and did shame to them.



Andrew Urshan, Ben's oldest brother.

Appendix B

Tributes to My Four Brothers

Andrew Bar-David Urshan

Andrew, the oldest of the five sons of David Bar-Urshan was indeed a unique person. Born in 1884, Andrew immigrated to the United States when he was eighteen years old.

Andrew was baptized with the Holy Spirit in Chicago, and as a preacher of the Assemblies of God, he often was advertised in his revivals as the "unique Persian evangelist."

The Urshan brothers were all born in Persia, yet by race we were not Persian but Assyrians. Originally the Assyrians were from Mesopotamia, now known as Iraq. The Arabs and Moslems took our land, and our people were scattered all over the Middle Eastern countries, as well as Europe, North America, and other continents.

In the spring of 1914 Andrew returned to Persia to bring the message of Pentecost to his people. He spent

much time in prayer, and God anointed him with power to touch people's lives.

Andrew not only survived the massacre in the fall and winter of 1914, but God used him in saving the lives of seventy-five people from the cruel bands of Kurds.

Persecution and hardships did not deter his love of the gospel. In 1915 he led his brothers and several cousins to Russia to escape the second massacre, and there he continued his ministry. As a ten-year-old I witnessed him baptizing seventy-five Russians in icy waters in Jesus' name, as well as Andrew's own baptism in Jesus' name according to Acts 2:38, when he received a deeper revelation of this biblical truth.

I did not see Andrew again until I immigrated to Canada, where he had charge of Emmanuel Mission Assembly in Montreal and also a church in Chicago in 1923-24. At this time I felt the call to step out into the ministry, and Andrew gave me a recommendation to the churches in Canada.

When our father died, Andrew became a father image to his younger brothers. Whenever I undertook anything important after I came to Canada, I always consulted him and took his advice. Once Andrew, with a hint of a teasing smile, said, "Ben, the reason you are being blessed in your life is because you listen to me."

In 1928 when I joined Andrew in a great revival in the Apostolic Temple in Winnipeg, Canada, he introduced me to the audience: "I'm the first and Ben is the last of the Urshan family."

I watched him daily for three weeks as he prayed heaven down in those meetings. I was with him as he prayed souls through to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He was a

wonderful example of a real man of God to me. I observed his God-given wisdom in dealing with ministers as well as church members. When Andrew finished his part of the revival, I had the "opportunity" to follow him. It was an unnerving experience that drove this young evangelist to his knees.

Andrew lived a sacrificial life and never spent money on luxuries. During his eighty-three years, he never owned a car. He once said to me, "The reason you and your brother Joseph are hard up for money at times is because you spend too much money on cars."

Andrew never cared for pies and cakes and only drank tea and coffee moderately. Once when he was scheduled for a revival in Dallas, Texas, with Pastor L. Hosch he said that Sister Hosch told her husband, "Now that Brother Urshan is coming to be with us, I must bake a cake and pie for him." When it was time to serve dessert, Andrew said, "Sister Hosch, I'm sorry, but I never eat pie or cake."

On another occasion someone asked, "Brother Urshan, would you like devil's food cake?"

"I never eat devil's food cake," he replied.

"Then how about angel food cake?"

"I'll take that," he conceded.

During his revivals when he stayed in a pastor's home, he asked permission to cook a meal for the household. He often did this in our home when he visited, and he taught my wife many Assyrian dishes.

I greatly admired him during a trial when an unfortunate circumstance befell him, leaving him with four young children to rear. It amazed me to see how he managed to care for them until they were on their own while

keeping his ministry active.

Andrew kept a love for the truth all during his life. For many years as editor of *The Witness of God* he published the Apostolic truth that reached thousands of lives. I personally know people who came to the light of the Oneness message through his writings.

Andrew was faithful to preach the gospel until the last days of his ministry when the Lord called him home on October 16, 1967. His wife, Ethel, passed away several years later.

Timothy Bar-David Urshan

Next to the oldest of the five Urshan brothers, my brother Timothy was a missionary to several countries: Persia, Iraq, India, and Palestine. He received the Holy Ghost in Chicago when our parents sent him to the United States to check on Andrew—about whom they had heard rumors that he was involved with a fanatical religious group that spoke in tongues. Instead of "rescuing" Andrew, Timothy became one of them.

Timothy and Andrew returned to Iran, were there for the march to Urmia, and later went to Russia for a year. Andrew's ministry was in full swing, while Timothy, newly Spirit-filled, was beginning to develop as a minister.

Timothy and Anna married before the big death march to Hamadan. Their firstborn, Mary, died at the end of that fateful march.

In the city of Hamadan Timothy was recruited by the British army to supervise the evacuation of refugees to Bakuba, Iraq. Later Timothy supervised the road work, using refugee labor. Twins, Lydia and Josiah, were born to Timothy and Anna during the year I was with them in

Baghdad.

When the twins were only a few months old, we sailed on a freighter to Bombay, India, where Timothy became the director of a Pentecostal mission when the British lady in charge returned to England.

Andrew and Bishop G. T. Haywood suggested that Timothy, who had acquired some knowledge of Arabic while in Iraq, should go to Palestine and work with the Arabs. At this time Andrew made arrangements for me to go to England to stay with the Thompson family until I could join him in the United States.

After ministering for five months in Bombay, Timothy and his family went to Palestine, where they purchased land and built a home.

There was no church organization to back Timothy at that time so he found a job as postal inspector for the British government. With his ability to read and write seven languages—English, Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic, Turkish, Farsi, and Pakistani (a combination of Hindi and Farsi)—his services were invaluable.

Timothy established several missions: a headquarters in Jerusalem, a branch mission in the ancient city of Jerusalem, and missions in Bethlehem, Bert-jala (the twin city of Bethlehem), and Jaffa (ancient Joppa). With several works developing, the family went to church four times on Sunday. They had church in Jerusalem and then walked to Bethlehem.

Altogether, Anna gave birth to eight children: Mary (deceased in childhood), Lydia, Josiah, John, David, Jonathan, Ruth, and Mary.

Timothy later went to Syria and Lebanon and established works there. Some of his workers became national

preachers who took works Timothy established in Beirut and Damascus.

Most of Timothy's converts were Jews and Arabs. Many miracles of healing took place in Timothy's ministry. His son, Jonathan, said, "We never went to doctors when I was growing up. When we were sick, we were prayed for and healed. I've seen blinded eyes healed.

"Once a converted Moslem was persecuted by Moslem Arabs. He stumbled to the mission steps, near death with five deep stab wounds and bleeding profusely. My father laid his hands on his major wounds and the blood immediately stopped. The man got to his feet completely healed."

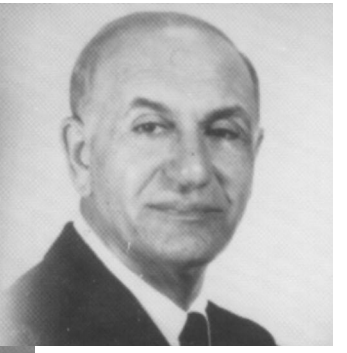
In 1948 Timothy came to the United States to attend a conference. While away from Palestine, his home was seized and he was not allowed to return. After several months his family was able to join him in the United States. Jonathan, at age eighteen, attended Apostolic College in Tulsa, Oklahoma, while David and Ruth went to Apostolic Bible Institute in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Duluth church where I pastored at the time sponsored the rest of the family.

Hoping to return to Palestine, for two years Timothy continued his deputation work to raise funds for missionary work in Palestine until he became ill. Timothy died with a ruptured ulcer in a hospital in Evanston, Illinois, in 1954. Anna moved to Indianapolis and lived near the church. She died twelve years after her husband's death.

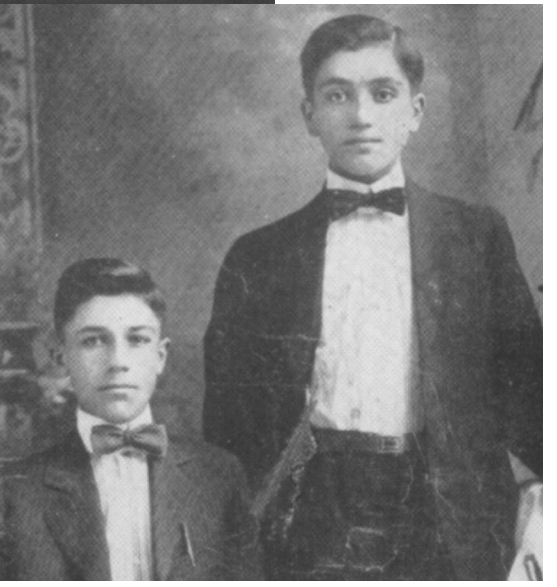
Timothy was a devoted Christian, loyal to his faithful wife, Anna, his children, and the cause of Christ.



Brother and Sister Timothy Urshan of Jerusalem.



Joseph Urshan. This was the last photo taken of him before he passed away in Dunnellton, Florida, where he pastored a church.



Josephus (Ben's brother) and their cousin, Jonathan Urshan. This photo was taken in 1917, and both boys died two weeks apart the following year.

Josephus Bar-David Urshan

Josephus, the third son of the Urshan family, was a handsome young man. He came to the United States with his older brother, Andrew, accompanied by his cousin Jonathan Urshan, who was more like a brother than a cousin. I was ten years old when Josephus left Persia.

The two young men settled in Chicago, found work and were doing well when Josephus caught a bad cold from the chilly, cold winter of that city and never seemed to get over it. The cold turned to pneumonia and Josephus died in 1920. I was in England when I heard the sad news from my older brother Andrew.

Josephus and his cousin Jonathan were always together in the old country and in their travels in the United States. Two weeks after the death of Josephus, Jonathan was found dead in his room. An autopsy could not determine the cause of Jonathan's death. When the physician learned of the closeness of the cousins, their adjustment to a new country, and the moral support they gave each other during this adjustment, he told Andrew that Jonathan died of a broken heart.

When as a young lad I heard of the death of Josephus, it affected me so deeply that I lost my appetite for food. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, my foster parents, tried to console me. They took me to London and did their best to help me overcome my sadness. I remember sitting across the table from them in a fine restaurant; they tried their best to get me to eat, but I could not eat. I noticed tears of compassion in the eyes of Mrs. Thompson. In my being away from my kinfolks and my struggle to learn the English language, the Lord helped me through the dark valley.

Joseph Bar-David Urshan

Mother Nasimo bore twins, Joseph and Benjamin, in 1902. Benjamin died in infancy. Joseph, the fourth of the Urshan brothers, was a strong and healthy boy, a born leader with a strong voice and a spirit as bold as a lion from his early youth.

Joseph received the Holy Ghost when Andrew returned to Persia in 1914. I witnessed his baptism in the Spirit as Andrew laid his hands on Joseph in our courtyard after an afternoon service.

Joseph received a remarkable anointing of the Spirit, so much so that when Andrew and Timothy left our village to preach in other towns and Andrew asked, "Who would like to lead the services while I am gone?" with one voice the group answered, "Joseph." So, in a sense, Joseph began his ministry at the age of twelve.

When World War I broke out and the Christian massacres began, Joseph fled to Russia with several members of our family to escape to a safer country. Later he went to England, where he was cared for by Dr. Pair, a Pentecostal gentleman in London.

Coming from a great revival in Russia, Joseph's heart was burning with zeal to reach the unsaved with the Apostolic message. He joined the street meetings conducted by the Pentecostals, got in the circle, dropped to his knees, and with tears streaming down his face pleaded for the unsaved to yield their hearts to God. His English friends were amazed at his love and boldness for God's cause.

In those days the truth of the Oneness was not revealed to Brothers Carter and Saxby of London nor to Joseph. When Joseph came to the United States our

brother Andrew placed Joseph in the care of D. I. Hammergren in Cochrane, Wisconsin. Brother Hammergren was owner and publisher of a community weekly newspaper. He also printed *The Witness of God* for Andrew as well as thousands of tracts that were sent forth.

In discussing doctrinal points, Brother Hammergren discovered that Joseph held the trinitarian viewpoint. Brother Hammergren prayed and tried his best to instruct Joseph with passages of Scripture on the oneness of God in Jesus Christ. One day the discussion turned into an argument, and Brother Hammergren decided that it would be better for Joseph to join his older brother, Andrew.

Joseph was disturbed and was reluctant to leave. He was learning the printing business and was doing well with it. It was made plain to Joseph that his trinitarian view, as vocal as he was, had created a problem in the assembly and it would be best if he joined Andrew.

Joseph got alone in prayer with his Bible open and prayed earnestly that God would reveal this truth to him if it was the right doctrine. God opened his understanding of the Scriptures and he received a beautiful revelation of the mighty God in Jesus Christ and baptism in Jesus' name. From that point he became a champion of this wonderful truth.

Joseph's first pastorate was Calvary Tabernacle on Fourth and Jefferson in Boise, Idaho. He opened this church on June 4, 1939.

He was founder of Beacon Hill Church at 2805 Beacon Avenue in Seattle, Washington. Brother Roy Mitchell of Morton, Washington, preached the dedication message on October 25, 1942.

In 1955 Joseph came to Birmingham, Alabama, and established two churches there. The first was the First Bible Pentecostal on 39th Avenue North and 25th Street, and the other was Pentecostal Revival Tabernacle on 51st Avenue Southeast.

Joseph evangelized in nearly every state in the United States and went as a missionary for a time to Jamaica in 1958.

In 1966 Joseph came to Inglis, Florida, and founded Faith Pentecostal Assembly. Three years later he and his family moved to Dunnellon, Florida, and built two churches: First Full Gospel Church on Pennsylvania Avenue, and in 1975 he dedicated the First Full Gospel Pentecostal on Highway 484 East where he ministered until his death on November 23, 1984. His wife, Ila, and son, Timothy, presently pastor this work.

Appendix C

Tributes to Benjamin D. U*rshan*

From Joy Carol Tschawuschian

Throughout my childhood, my father and mother were dedicated to the service of God, and cared for the people who were passing through the hard time of Depression in the 1930s. It was wonderful to see how God in His providence supplied the needs and how the church grew and prospered.

The happiest day of our lives was moving from the apartment above the storefront church into a charming white-gable, two-story house. From the front porch and a large bay window we could see iron-ore boats coming and going on beautiful Lake Superior.

During World War II days Dad took on an extra job at the shipyard, which helped with the purchase of our long-awaited dream-come-true home and a new church building. Dad taught us how to care for the things the Lord gave us. Mother and I cleaned house each Saturday,

and extra jobs included mowing the lawn and manicuring flower beds.

Saturday night was prayer meeting. Afterwards, we would clean the sanctuary, making it ready for Sunday services. In my heart I knew this was a special privilege.

The radio broadcast preceded the Sunday morning service, and Dad counted on my help with the music.

Watching Dad's life of true caring and interest in people, in the world, and in spiritual things affected my life and my sons, Trey, Ben, and Pat.

My roots grow deeply, cultivated by the things Dad taught and by his experiences in childhood, bravery, and determination, along with faith in a living God. I honor Dad with a heart full of love and appreciation in this special edition of his life story.

From his daughter,
Joy Carol

True Love

True love is a sacred flame
that burns eternally,
And none can dim its special glow
or change its destiny.

True love speaks in tender tones
and hears with gentle ear.
True love gives with open heart,
and true love conquers fear.

True love makes no harsh demands
it neither rules nor binds;
And true love holds with gentle hands
the heart that it entwines.

Happy Anniversary,
Mom and Dad
From your daughter,
Joy Carol Tschawuschian

From Dave Urshan

He was the best father a young boy could ever have. Not only was he honest, thoughtful, and a good example, but he did all the fun things boys love to do, like hunting deer and fishing on the Sawbill trail.

At age ten, shortly after my Dad's cataract surgery, I remember reading the Bible to him hurriedly so I could go outside and play. He knew the Bible so well that he caught me skipping verses.

As an adult, I respect my Dad as a great man. He has always been a loving person committed to his family and God.

His son,
Dave

From Paul Urshan

Just a little note to you on this Father's Day. I was thinking about how good life has been for me. I have so many fond memories of my childhood and subsequent years in junior high and high school. Then I broke away from you and Mom, entered the service and then entered college—preparing for the future. It has been a life with few regrets, few trials, few hard times. Yes, I could have done a few things better, but it has not been bad.

God has really been good! He has given me a great mate for life, children, a home, and a great church with an outstanding pastor and church family.

I really think that for things to go this well, there has to be a reason, and I always feel the reason for it is because I have had a great dad. As every young person will agree, there were times when I did not understand why you required certain things, but looking back, it was necessary. Now I apply many of the same principles, and I hope and pray they work!

So . . . I want to thank you, Dad, first of all for just being there and then for the characteristics you exemplified: loyalty, faithfulness, commitment, dedication, unselfishness, a forgiving spirit, self-discipline, patience, and kindness. Your walk with the Lord exemplified conviction, consecration, love, giving, and uncompromising character. You truly are a man of principle.

Finally, there is one thing that cannot be substituted and that is *love*. I always felt that I was loved and wanted, and that I was somebody. This gave me the ability to go out and say, "Hey, I've got something to contribute, and I can obtain a little of what's good out there!" And I got it!

Thanks, Dad!

Your son,
Paul

From Brother David Scott

For the past eighteen years I have been a pastor in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Often I look back to the time when I was a young man and Brother Urshan was the pastor of our church in Clintonville, Wisconsin, as an important time in my own spiritual development. I was intrigued with the Urshans' enthusiasm for God and the church and for life.

One time I was invited to their home for dinner, without my parents. We had a wonderful meal of roast lamb with rich gravy, curried rice, and all the trimmings. It was not only delicious, it was beautiful. The home as well was beautiful. There were rich Persian carpets on the floors and other furnishings from Iran, including a wonderful brass table.

After the meal we sat in the living room and talked. I don't remember our conversation, but I do remember Brother Urshan's wonderful inviting smile. I felt very special and very loved.

One conversation I do remember took place while my parents were in Florida for a Christmas holiday. I had stayed home to attend school and go to my job. I was planning to go to Green Bay to see the "Holiday on Ice" show. When Brother Urshan heard of my plans he spoke to me and expressed his view that this was not an appropriate place for a believer to go and that my parents would feel the same way. I remember this conversation because I was angry. "After all," I said to myself, "I'm over sixteen years old and I have a right to go if I want to." After I thought about it, I decided I would not go out of respect for the pastor.

I share this experience because it shows the kind of

careful balance Brother Urshan sought to maintain in his own life. On the one hand, there was a wonderful enthusiasm for life, that life is to be enjoyed, because "the earth is the Lord's," and yet, there was a deep commitment to the Lord and a radical departure from the aspects of our society that did not reflect that commitment to the Lord Jesus.

And so I have looked back with thanksgiving to this time in my life and to the lessons I learned while Brother and Sister Urshan pastored our church. And I, too, have sought to have a heart for God and the church and a love for life balanced as beautifully as they have.

David Scott
Pastor, Allentown, Pennsylvania

From Brother James D. Merrick

I wanted to write and express my appreciation personally for the years of labor you bestowed on the work here in Duluth. While writing a letter this evening, my thoughts went back over the years the church here has been in existence. God has been so good to us since we moved here almost seventeen years ago. I've been reminded tonight that others suffered and sacrificed for this work when the going was very rough. I want you to know that your efforts were not in vain and indeed they are appreciated.

Although I have stated my appreciation of your family's sacrifices for the work publicly to the church, I did not remember if I had ever expressed them privately to you. I know Duluth had its share of problems in the past, and occasionally we still have some, but out of those years of struggle strong faithful saints emerged. For these we are so thankful.

One by one the older saints have begun passing away. I'm reminded of Grandma Maki, Grandma Madrinich, Fred Sawyer, and more recently, Edna Penner and others. Now Sister Oland is very feeble and as I watch Brother and Sister Tauno Maki begin to age and their steps grow slower, I felt that I should simply say thanks for allowing God to use you here in Duluth.

We covet your prayers for us as we continue in the blessings and labors that you and your family have been such a great part of. Please feel free to visit the church anytime you are in or near Duluth. We will treat you kindly and welcome you.

May God richly bless you wherever you are laboring for Him at the present time.

Your friend and brother in Christ,
James D. Merrick
Pastor of Apostolic Church
Duluth, Minnesota

From Brother M. Craig Stallard

My wife and I came to Albuquerque fresh out of Bible college in June 1978.

Pastor Urshan had graciously invited us to assist in the work at Bethel United Pentecostal Church and we were excited about the opportunity. Looking back at the four years we spent under the wings of Brother and Sister Urshan, I can't help but praise God for this priceless experience.

Sometimes the position of assistant pastor can be very frustrating if the purpose the pastor has in mind is to free himself of all those "unwanted duties." I soon discovered that Brother Urshan was a jewel among pastors. He never asked me to do anything that he himself would not do.

Saturday morning visitation was not delegated to someone else; Brother Urshan walked the neighborhoods with the bus captains knocking doors. Brother Urshan had a genuine love for children, and Sunday mornings were always special at Bethel. He would open up Sunday school with special singing just for kids (from age zero to one hundred). I'll never forget Brother Urshan leading, "Somewhere in outer space God has prepared a place for those who trust him and obey." It was a real joy to watch the pastor lead the children in singing certain songs that had actions. I don't know how many times Pastor Urshan demonstrated how to march in the infantry, ride in the cavalry, and shoot the artillery. With our invisible slings, we relived the battle between David and Goliath nearly every Sunday.

Often when children are picked up by a bus or van they are prejudged and placed in a special category—just

"bus kids." But Pastor Urshan knew of the special love God had for these individuals. There are Holy Ghost-filled children of God now from among these souls that would have been overlooked by some.

I can never forget a message preached by Brother Urshan from Isaiah 57:15: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Brother Urshan reflected this attitude in his love and care for the lowly ones.

Brother Urshan and I had a wonderful relationship over the time we worked together. He and I have always shared a common interest in the game of chess. Upon my arrival in Albuquerque I found a formidible opponent in Brother Urshan. If I recall correctly, I had the majority of wins in our ongoing series. (However, this opinion may be challenged, depending on who you ask!) One thing was sure, if I began to win a few too many chess games, Brother Urshan could always pull out the checkers and deflate my ego in short order! Sister Urshan was always such a patient hostess even when our rivalry made for some very late evenings.

I must say that one of the greatest things about my fellowship with Pastor Urshan was that it gave me a chance to eat Sister Urshan's cooking. She always provided hot tea and some delightful snack while we played chess.

If I was extremely fortunate, I would accidentally drop by the parsonage when she had just prepared something for lunch. Of course, she always insisted that I come in

and stay for lunch. Somehow no matter how hard (and insincerely) I tried to get out of it, I always ended up sitting down with Brother and Sister Urshan and enjoyed a delicious meal. I'll never forget enjoying a bowl of homemade soup while Brother Urshan began explaining that this special recipe was a traditional recipe from the "old country." I soon learned that traditionally this soup, bushalla, was what Esau sold his birthright for. I probably would have been better off without knowing that it was made with spinach and sour milk! Of course, you have to forget the ingredients and just enjoy the result!

The four years we spent with Brother Urshan were filled with many unforgettable experiences. But most of all I thank God for the opportunity to develop spiritually under this great man. I pray that I can follow Pastor Urshan's example of devotion and consistent service.

M. Craig Stallard
Assistant to Pastor, Calvary Tabernacle
Longview, Texas

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