



“Holy Spirit and i”

Christina Fez Barrington

“Holy Spirit and i”



Christina Fez-Barrington



Doveslanding

North Fort Myers, Florida

Holy Spirit and I

All rights reserved

Copyright (C) 2011 Christina Fez-Barrington

Edited by Annie Lindstrom

Book design including artwork by Barie Fez-Barrington

All photographs are from the private collection of the
author.

Cover design (C) 2011 All rights reserved

This book may not be reproduced, transmitted, or stored
in whole or in part by any means, including graphic,
electronic, or mechanical without the express written
consent of the author except in the case of brief
quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

<http://writethevision.webs.com>

www.bariefez-barrington.com

ISBN-13 978-615-46609-5

Library of congress control number (LCCN): pending

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Forward

This is a book of true Holy Spirit miracles. A collection of events natural to God but super natural to us. Only if we trust and believe in the divine person of the Holy Spirit can we accept his wonders.

Germany celebrates three equally important holidays. Christmas, Easter and Pfingsten. Christmas is where we thank God for his gift of His Son Jesus Christ. Easter is where we thank Jesus who gave his life for us; but Pfingsten? When I was a little girl I used to love this holiday the whole house was filled with fresh flowers from our Garden and we gave flowers to our friends and relatives. When I asked why? I got ridiculous answers; the best was we celebrate spring. In reality it is the day of Pentecost where we must give thanks and equal recognition to the Holy Spirit the third person of the Trinity.

Most people have no idea who the Holy Spirit is. The fact is the Holy Spirit is “God in Action”. Our Lord Jesus after He left the earth sent, on the day of Pentecost, His Holy Spirit to watch over us; for that we must be truly grateful, and we do that by recognizing His Work.

The book is based on real-life experiences. What you read in this book is to show through examples throughout my life the Holy Spirit in action. I selected the contexts, persons and events that the Holy Spirit wanted you to know. It is unique because it is not autobiographical but rather each chapter describes a separate victorious episode where God clearly demonstrated His love and care for me;

Because English is my second language and I am naturally a fine artist in sculpture and painting, writing was not my own but the Holy Spirit’s media and I am very grateful for the many edits by Annie Lundstrom.

It took years for me to understand that it is He who was there to help when I was in need. Only because of our Christian activities in Saudi Arabia, where the Holy Spirit was indispensable, did I learn to know Him so that I can write about Him with assurance.

“Holy Spirit and I” shows that God had a plan for me. His will was to call me at a given time to serve Him in a country hostile to Christianity. The idea to be a missionary would never enter my mind, but when the Holy Spirit called my husband and I, I answered, “yes Lord, here I am”.

Each chapter demonstrates different miraculous aspects of the Holy Spirit and therefore inspires and encourages the reader to learn to know more. Also “*Holy Sprit and i*” is educational, teaching the reader how to see the work of the Holy Spirit, and answer the calling of the Holy Spirit, in his own life, this unique book shows how the Holy Spirit and God’s angels accompanied me in Germany, Saudi Arabia and America. It is unique because of the way the Holy Spirit delivered me from the war–torn times of Hitler’s Germany. Chapter 3 shows why I had to leave my home and flee Russian occupied Germany and how God’s Holy Spirit led me safely across the border from East to West and eventually to my new home, where I was truly “born again”, the United Stats of America.

Acknowledgements

To Dan and Darlene Betzer, Gerald Derstine, Warren Flattery, Joseph and Dori Heidecker, Don and Paula Strubel who listened to the call of the Holy Spirit whenever we needed prayers or help in our mission to Saudi Arabia.

Also I thank Annie Lindstrom, my faithful friend, who used her editing expertise and her keen insight into my experience with the Holy Spirit to bring my book closer to publication.

And I wish to thank my dear husband Barie for his loving encouragement to me writing the book, and for his skillful artwork to complete this book.

“Holy Spirit and i”

Christina Fez-Barrington
Edited by Annie Lindstrom
Introduction by Darlene Betzer
Cover and Artwork by Barie Fez-Barrington

Table of Contents

	Forward
	Acknowledgments
	Introduction
Chapter 1	Angels and Children
Chapter 2	The Bombing of Leipzig
Chapter 3	Running to Be Free
Chapter 4	Going to America
Chapter 5	Two Prophetic Dreams
Chapter 6	Going my way
Chapter 7	The Accidents
Chapter 8	Strange Encounter
Chapter 9	The End and a New Beginning
Chapter 10	Miraculous Happenings
Chapter 11	Pentecost Again
Chapter 12	Getting Married the <i>Third</i> Time
Chapter 13	God Knows Best
Chapter 14	Running ahead of the Lord
Chapter 15	Saudi calling
Chapter 16	The Little Red Car
Chapter 17	The Devil Fails
Chapter 18	Going Home

Introduction

By
Darlene Betzer

Christina and I met for lunch at the Edison Restaurant on the famous, Royal Palm Tree-lined McGregor Boulevard in Fort Myers, Florida. I could not keep from breaking into a huge smile when I thought of the privilege of the moment – and its divine surprise. There was my good friend of many years on the other side of the table. I always knew she was an amazing woman, but after reading her new book *Holy Spirit and i*, and I felt as though I was seeing her through new eyes. I felt almost like a little girl seeing a princess for the first time.

Instead of my friend, I was having lunch with a truly gifted artist who had always had a future as bright as the mid-day sun. The book revealed how this gracious lady had become a trusted guest in some of the finest homes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It also opened my eyes to how The Holy Spirit had arranged her life to be used to make God and His ways known to others during a lifetime of intrigue and constant uncertainties.

I have always admired Christina and her husband, Barie, a gifted architect renowned for designing cities and modern works of structural splendor that reflect the shapes of a world quite unlike the West. Christina and Barie moved about in a circle of friends and business associates of the highest level during their assignments in the Middle East. She had often shared with me privately the details of the danger and drama of their simple lives, which were layered with very complex agendas.

But wherever they have served, Christina and Barie have made an incredible impact for Christ. Their multicultural and multilingual backgrounds have made them sought after all across the world, but there was a Divine order to their professional lives that can only be accounted for by understanding their faith and their personal trust in Jesus Christ. How else could you account for the way the Holy Spirit used them to make Christ known among unreachable people, especially those in regions of the world where Jesus Christ was not believed to be anyone more than a great teacher and prophet.

For as long as I have known her, Christina has always been full of life, not just her own life but of life that the Holy Spirit has been working to make known to her long before I met her.

In our first meeting years ago, I was a bit overwhelmed with the vast panorama of her involvement in so many activities and with so many people, all closely aligned with her passion and zeal to get God's message to everyone.

The language of Christina's heart is unique. Her eager desire to speak of the Holy Spirit's work in her business and professional involvements is always missional and always carries an appeal to get others involved.

She recruits others to prayer so that they, too, may become passionate about making Christ known to others. As she has always said, "The Holy Spirit is always at work bringing people to Christ."

But, it was not until I read Christina's manuscript that I realized I was a friend with someone I only thought I knew. In her early years, Christina did not even know who the Holy Spirit was. She merely recognized that God was present in the ordinary circumstances of her life.

As it was with Christina's life, experiencing first moments of divine intervention eventually makes it clear to all of us that we all matter to God and that He intentionally reveals Himself to us time and time again, even before we fully understand who He is. Yet, all too often we fail not realize His intentions and that He is the one that is orchestrating our lives. Nevertheless, each time God acts to make Himself known to us, the Holy Spirit is at work.

Christina's journey into the heart of God's lavish love begins with the Holy Spirit simply drawing her to God. Recognizing and understanding God's love-gift, Jesus Christ, takes time. God pursues us via His Holy Spirit by lovingly inviting us to that place of acknowledgement and recognition of the one who became our sacrifice for sin, God's perfect sinless lamb, Jesus Christ.

Even at the first sign of God's pursuit, Christina begins to recognize that her circumstances are not coincidental; rather they are orchestrated by God. But it takes time to realize this fully because the Holy Spirit works in ways that our natural thought processes often overlook. Nevertheless, He continues to try to get our attention and capture our hearts with His love. It is the Holy Spirit's gracious wooing of our hearts to finally receive Jesus Christ into our lives, which leads us to fully yield our lives to His Lordship.

That God relentlessly pursues each of us in order to reveal His endless love is evidence of the uniqueness of our value and worth to God. We are His choice creatures of all creation. We are created in His image to reflect His likeness and bring others to know that His salvation through Jesus Christ is the only way, the only truth and the only life.

In her book, Christina's life experiences clearly show how the Holy Spirit's many attempts to develop a reasoned response and create viable understanding of who it is that is at work in her life are what ultimately bring her to the Cross. Christina gives us a delightful series of vignettes that reveal some of the ways that the Holy Spirit impacted her life in His relentless pursuit to reconcile her to God.

If you are seeking to know God and have friends who do not yet recognize His intentional love toward them, Christina's book is evidence of how the Holy Spirit kept pursuing her until she understood

Who He is and how she could respond fully to Christ and allow Him to use her in places of impossible, and sometimes life threatening, circumstances.

The ultimate joy of this book is that it leads the reader into the faithful heart of God who is not willing that any should perish. The stories show how the Holy Spirit is working all things together for good for God's purposes in the details of our personal lives and among the nations. In reading this book may your faith be released to believe there is still hope. And may you see more clearly that the Holy Spirit and you have a divine assignment and purpose in this life on your way to your next life in God's eternal home.

PS to Christina from Darlene

I love the way the Holy Spirit brought our lives together as friends by using our husband's interaction. I love your relentless and passionate desire to share the love of Jesus with everyone everywhere. I am honored to read the evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in the earliest details of His Divine pursuit of you. You were one very capable and self-sufficient woman of the world, going your own way. The Holy Spirit faithfully pursued you with the Father's love, always enticing you to accept the sacrifice of His Son. Your book makes the Holy Spirit recognizable and desirable. Thank you for revealing God's love – poured out by His Spirit in mercy and abounding grace—making us into His Spirit-filled agents for transformational change by the power of the Cross. To Jesus Christ be all the glory!

Your admiring friend,

Darlene Beem Betzer



Herman's house in Weisenborn

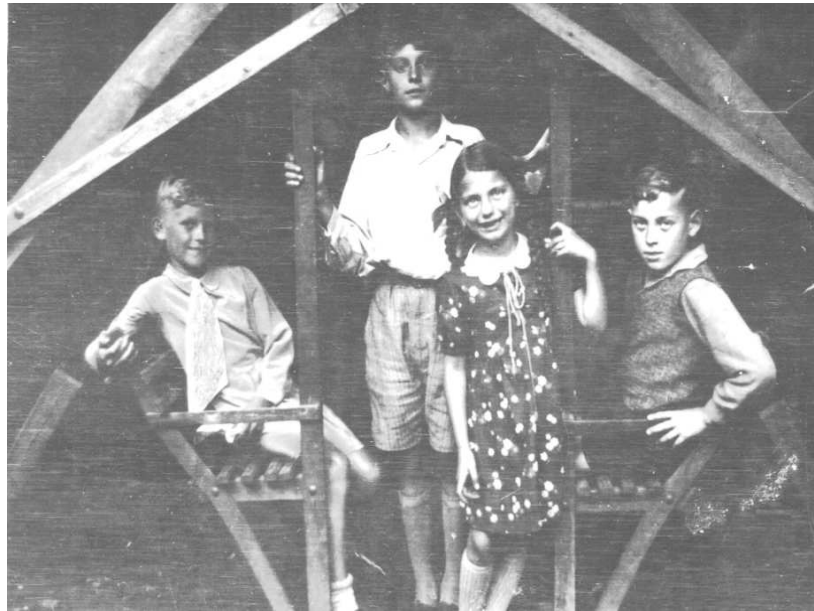
-1-

Angels and Children

At twilight, when the sun was sinking into the mist blanketing the floor of the valley, there was a hush in the big old home of my grandparents. All six of us grandchildren were snuggled up with Grandfather listening intently while he told us the adventures of Robinson Crusoe over and over again. Finally, when it got totally dark, Grandmother clicked the light on and began preparing the table for dinner. My grandfather was

born in that old country farmhouse and it was the family residence for several generations.

The pretty home came alive again when my grandparents retired and moved back home. A large building, the farmhouse sat comfortably upon the side of a hill overlooking the valley, which shimmered like gold when the sun began its slow descent toward the horizon. Behind the house there was a thick pine forest that seemed to stretch on forever. The fresh-smelling trees delighted us with a gentle hum as their branches swayed rhythmically in the perpetual breeze of the mountain wind. Today, my cousins Joachim and I love to remember the happy times when the whole family drove to the little village of Weisenborn to visit Grandfather and Grandmother. Our favorite playground was the forest behind the house.



Christina and cousins: Gunter, Joachim, and Hansi

We found mushrooms in its sandy soil, picked wild strawberries in its sunny clearings and rolled gaily down

the slope of its soft moss-covered ground. Life there was easy and fun. But there was one day when our joyfully flowing life was rippled. It was the summer before my fourth birthday. I was the youngest grandchild. My cousin Lea was already eleven and the three boys were nine, eleven and twelve. We always liked to play together, and only on rare occasions would we permit kids from the neighborhood to join in on our fun.

However, there was one exception to this rule -- my best friend Grete. Grete was special. Though she was only one year older than I, she seemed to me to be so very wise and grown up.

Grete lived down the road with her family in a building my grandfather had donated to the town so that poor families with many children could live rent-free. Grete had four older brothers who were a rough bunch and not well liked by my cousins. Every now and then the two boys closest to my cousin's age came to play, but those play sessions almost always ended in a big fight.

One morning, I was working in my grandmother's herb garden and two of Grete's brothers were hanging around. They called me over to the fence and said,

"Christl come quickly, your cousin Günter is up in the forest and he wants to show you something. You have to come with us right away.

"No," I said, "Günter went with the others to the glassier get the cellar window fixed."

"Oh no," the boys protested, "Günter didn't go with them, he went with us. We found something very special and we want to show it to you too, but only if you can keep a secret."

"I'm not going if Grete doesn't go with me," I replied.

"She's already there, she is waiting for you," they said.

“Come on, come on!”

Reluctantly, I squeezed through the fence and went with the boys into the forest. The path was full of big black roots. The older kids made a game out of jumping from root to root, giggling and chatting while I struggled to climb over each of the slippery, knurled obstacles. Walking was cumbersome and I was beginning to regret that I had agreed to go with them in the first place. I also realized that I had never gone so deep into the forest without a grown-up by my side. All at once I sensed that something was wrong.

“Where is Günter?” I asked.

“Over there, don’t you see?” said one of the boys pointing into the distance. I hesitated to go on, but the two kids pulled me and yelled, “Don’t stop, just let’s go, let’s go.”

“No,” I said with determination, “I want to go home”.

The way they were behaving caused a strange feeling of fear to well up in me. It was odd because I’d never before had a reason to be fearful of anything or anyone. Even my cousins knew that I was never scared. They’d try to startle me by sneaking up on me from behind, but my response was always just a giggle. This time was different. I was truly frightened. I didn’t know why I was so scared, but instinctively I knew that what was happening was not good so I yelled at the top of my voice,

“Günter, Grete where are you?” There was no answer.

Then the boys pushed me down and hovered over me, staring silently. In that moment it was as if I heard my mother praying a lovely little prayer she had taught me in which I ask Jesus to send an angel to watch over me. I sprang to my feet and pulled myself away from the two angry boys crying out to the angel.

“Angel, help me, help me!” I called. And then I ran.

The large roots and ruts on the path were no obstacle for me anymore. The boys ran behind me trying to catch me, but one of them must have tripped over the roots. I heard them cursing and shouting at me to stop running. I ran so fast that it felt like I was flying. Soon my little legs could not go on any longer so I stopped to face my pursuers. But, where were they? I wondered. Why was it suddenly so still?

To my amazement I saw my German Shepherd Prince standing in the path snarling and growling at the two quivering rascals. The dog made sure they didn’t move an inch. Prince was trained to be a watchdog so he knew not to bite, but he also knew how to scare anyone who came too close to us children. Instantly I felt safe. And then, what joy, I looked up to see my mother standing next to me. She lifted me up into her loving arms and held me tight. All was well again.

Later, my mother told me that when she and Grandmother couldn’t find me in the house, they assumed I had been running after my cousins. Grandfather had sent them to the glassier to fix the window they had broken while playing. Mother and Grandmother knew that Grandfather had told me to stay home, because the walk was much too far for a little girl. But my mother and Grandmother also knew that I did not always listen. So, they assumed I had run to catch up with my cousins.

As they hastened into town to fetch me, my mother clearly heard me crying even though it would have been impossible for her to hear me from that distance. Intuitively she knew my cry came from the forest and turned around abruptly. She ran up the hill into the forest. It was a long, long way to where she found me and she

couldn't explain how she got there as fast as she did. Also, Prince was usually along with us children whenever we went for a long walk. But because the walk to the glassier was a punishment for breaking the window, Grandfather kept the dog chained up in the yard. Prince yanked himself free from his chain to come to my rescue in the nick of time. On that day God showed me that I need never be afraid or worry. God and His Angels are with us all the time to help whenever we are in need. We are never alone -- if only we believe.



The Luther Kirche in Leipzig: Christina's family church.

- 2 -

Bombing of Leipzig

World War II raged in and around Germany. All of the country's available men had been drafted into the army. Only old people, women and children lived in its cities. Yet, night-after-night the largest cities were systematically bombed and much of Germany's history and heritage were forever lost in the process.

Only Dresden and Leipzig, two of Germany's major urban centers, were not yet in ruin. In Leipzig, we hoped and prayed that our great metropolis, which Goethe called his "little Paris," would be spared. Before the war, beautiful Leipzig was the capital of German commerce and welcomed business people from all over the world to attend the Leipziger Messe.

In addition to its business opportunities, people who visited Leipzig, which was called the City of Books, also enjoyed its excellence in music, art, theater and culture.



**Left: Max Reinhold Schneider:
portrait painting by Christina**

In and around the city were the homes of many great men and women, including Bach, Wagner, Handel, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Gutenberg and many more.

And Leipzig's leading university benefited the whole world with its books, scientific research and

huge treasure trove of human accomplishment.

Unfortunately, our hopes that Leipzig would be spared were demolished when the bombs began to fall on the city and obliterate its historical treasures and civilian population. As more and more bombs dropped from the sky, more and more historical treasures were destroyed along with a great multitude of people.

And what little the bombs did not demolish during the war was later destroyed during the Russian occupation. Today Leipzig is of little importance to the world—its former glory all but forgotten.

I remember well how the people of Leipzig suffered the consequences of the war. Like most people across Germany, those of us in the city were hungry and cold.

There was little food to eat and no coal to heat our homes.

And night-after-night the air raid sirens blared into the cold air robbing us of the chance to even try to get some much-needed sleep. Shortly after the sirens stopped wailing, all of the people living in our apartment house would stagger into the safety-room in the damp cellar. We would huddle silently together for hours listening to the monotonous hum of hundreds of airplanes flying overhead for hours, each of us wondering if we'd survive to see the next day.

My father was a volunteer-warden. After a few nights of air raids he didn't bother undressing for bed any more. As soon as he heard the warning call of the sirens he would rush to open the front door and direct people who were out on the street into our shelter.

Meanwhile, my mother and I would drag ourselves slowly out of bed and procrastinate in our apartment until my father ordered us into the cellar.

The night of December 4, 1942 was very different than previous nights. The sirens had not yet gone off, but I felt someone pull me forcefully out of my bed as I heard loud bangs off in the distance quickly coming closer and closer.

I knew we were in for something terrible. Suddenly, the sirens sounded and I heard my father jumping down the dark stairs. Someone behind me said, "Quick, go get your mother." Almost immediately she was standing right beside me. I grabbed her hand and both of us felt as if we were being propelled down the stairs to the cellar.

After closing the cellar door we clicked on the lights. We both felt the person behind us who'd been guiding us from our beds to the cellar loosen his grip on our shoulders.

But when we turned around to see who it was, there wasn't anybody there. We were all alone.

Before we could begin to wonder who, or where our guardian was, the deafening blast of an exploding bomb filled the air. Then shouting voices and persistent pounding on the cellar wall got our attention. Suddenly, the wall broke and people from the neighboring house who had been trapped in their cellar streamed through the hole in the wall and into our shelter, carrying their wounded with them. My mother and I hastened to help.

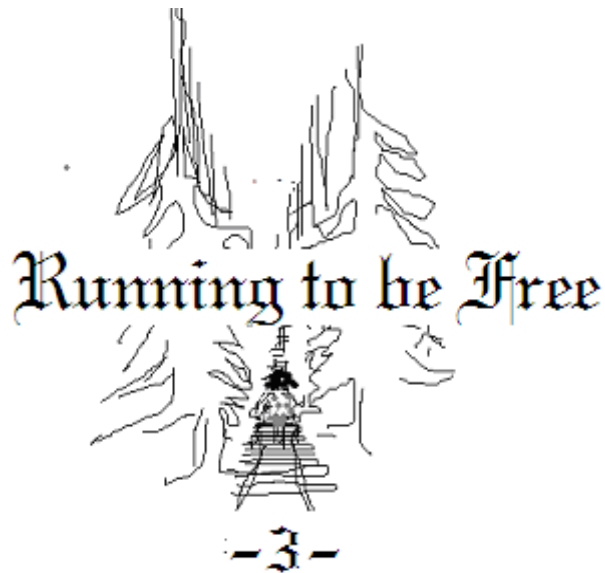
After what seemed like an eternity, my father appeared. But the news he brought us was grim. The upper floors of the apartment house had been blown off by the blast and the rest of the building would burn down soon. He ordered everyone to bring the wounded to a less damaged building across the street. While we were busy tending to the wounded, a second wave of airplanes threw firebombs down from the sky and the whole city went up in flames.

That night we lost our home, my father's business and his life's work. But we had each other and we thanked God that we were still alive. Night turned into day, but the sky was still dark because the smoke billowing over our burning city obscured the sun. My parents and I hiked to my grandfather's city home and we arrived there in the afternoon.

Always a generous host, my grandfather had spent all of his food stamps for the month to prepare a scrumptious meal for us. While we appreciated what he did, we were exhausted and in shock and we could not eat. Instead, we told him in detail what had happened the night before. But there was one question we could not answer — why had we survived when most of the people who lived around us had not?

Even my brave father said that when the big bomb hit, he stood petrified in his ground floor office. Glass and wood were flying everywhere, but none of it hit him and he walked away unscathed. “How was that possible?” he wondered.

We concocted several seemingly logical reasons for our survival, but not once did anybody mention God, the Holy Spirit, or our guardian Angel. I know that we were thinking that it was God’s guardian angels that helped to keep us alive, but no one admitted their thoughts aloud. Even so, we all knew that there was no other explanation.



After the war, East Germany including all of Saxony was under Russian occupation. The sheer misery during this turbulent time caused many Germans to lose their hope and belief in God. We were cold because we had no coal to heat our homes. We were hungry because the food ration that was supposed to last for one week was in reality only enough food for one day. And we were grieving because millions of our loved ones had not returned from the war. One year before the war ended, my father was drafted into the army. At the end of the war he did not come home, but my mother and I continued to pray that he was still alive.

Last but not least, our money was so devalued that what little we had left was worthless. So, I had to find a job.

Fortunately, I was blessed in my search. Religion was a required subject in our schools and the pastors of our Lutheran Church had a program whereby Leipzig University, in cooperation with other clergy, trained interested students to become teachers of religion. It was a wonderful opportunity for me because at that time they had an urgent need of teachers. I became a student at Leipzig University and taught at the same time, which enabled me to support my family.

Then one day, thank God, our prayers were answered and my father came home. He had been imprisoned in Auschwitz, but he was released because he was nearly 60 and too old to work in a Russian coal mine. Yet the happiness we felt being reunited, as a family did not last very long. We began to notice that many young people in our circle of friends were disappearing. Russian soldiers picked some up from their homes and others never made it home from school. No one ever heard from these young man and women again and we all worried and wondered who might be next.

Sadly, we soon learned that my dear high school girlfriend Ingeborg De Risse was also arrested. Her family owned a big farm and her father had died from diabetes for lack of medicine, which was just not available at that time. Her two brothers were killed in the war and she had to run the farm alone with little help.

She begun to study languages and planned, when she finished with her studies of English and French, to sell the farm and work as a translator. To practice her English, she had corresponded with an American student. This innocent effort to help her studies was considered “anti-Communist behavior” a crime of which thousands of East Germans would be accused.

The authorities confiscated her farm and imprisoned her for an indefinite period of time. Adding to all this uneasiness came the word that all students of Leipzig University must join the Communist party. I did not want to join the Communist party and so, my parents reluctantly decided I had to flee to West Germany; as it was, as quickly as possible.

In the early 1950's, the horrible wall, which parted my country until 1989, was not yet built. Nevertheless, it was very dangerous to try to cross the border. Many people who wanted to be free from Communist oppression took their chances. Some were lucky, but those who failed were arrested and often never seen or heard from again.

There were many rumors about the best way to get from East to West Germany. I learned that where I planned to cross the border, I would have to walk about 20 miles through a forest. That meant whatever I planned to take with me would need to fit into a knapsack. It didn't take long for me to get ready to go.

While my family and I were heartbroken that I was leaving, we were also filled with hope because we believed that the adverse conditions in East Germany would be over soon and I would be able to return. None of us expected or could even imagine, that this parting would be forever.

I left Leipzig in a little old cho-cho train with a coal-fueled locomotive headed for a small border town. The train was traveling very slowly because it stopped in every small village along the way. Finally the conductor called loudly, "End station!" To me it was more than an end station, it was the end of a depressing past and the beginning of an uncertain future. As daylight faded the other passengers and I left the train silently and quickly.

Once on the platform I began to look for a man who, for a fee, was said to lead groups of refugees through the thick forest to safety.

At the end of the platform I spotted a group of forlorn people -- several men, a woman with two small children and a woman with her baby in a knapsack. A man, looking nervously in every direction, approached me and commanded, "Come quickly!"

He rushed all of us onto a narrow dirt road, which led to a wheat field. To avoid being spotted in the rising moonlight we ran to the distant forest. When we finally stood under the cover of the trees gasping for breath, our guide collected his money.

Then he said, "Now I have to leave you."

Pointing to an almost imperceptible path he told us, "Stay on it until you reach the end of the forest. The end of the forest is the border. When you look down the hill you will see a railroad track. Wait there until the train comes. The conductor will watch for you and slow the train down so you can jump on. The next stop will be the city called Hof. Good luck," he said and was gone.

Everyone in the little group was totally perplexed because we had expected the man to lead us all the way to the border. Many grew angry and loud, as they discussed the situation. Their disturbing behavior made me feel more and more uneasy.

And then it was as if an invisible person was on my side watching my every move while subtly nudging me farther and farther away from the group.

The farther away from them I got, the more a strong inner conviction welled up inside me and assured me that, with the help of God, I could find my way to freedom on my own.

At first I walked along the path our guide had suggested. I stumbled over branches and roots until the trees parted and when I looked down I noticed an unused overgrown railroad track going from East to West. As I continued to walk along the dirt path I distinctively heard a voice telling me to, "Follow the tracks." So I did.

I felt then, and now know; that the voice was that of the Holy Spirit and the invisible person walking next to me was my guardian angel. Yet, even knowing I was under the protection of God and my unshakable hope that all would go well, did not take away my fear. I knew the border guards were hiding in the forest waiting to catch fugitives.

So the sense of danger permeating the forest was only heightened when I heard the occasional sounds of voices, barking dogs and metallic clinking.

After walking for hours, I was hungry and thirsty. I yearned for a little bite to eat. I had not eaten all day but hunger was not new to me, so I had just stopped thinking about it. It was nearly midnight when the tracks led me to a small clearing.

They're before me in the middle of a clearing stood a broken down hut surrounded by a huge array of tall bushes. I kept my gaze to the ground to avoid stumbling over an object. But from the corner of my eyes I could see that the bushes were laden with sweet, luscious raspberries. To my delight and joy I ate and ate until my belly was full. Raspberries had never tasted so good. I sat down and wanted to rest a while, but a gentle voice said firmly, "You must go on now." Obediently, I shouldered my knapsack and walked on.

Suddenly the stillness of the night was pierced by the screams of women; loud barking of dogs' gunshots and harsh voices commanding, "Stop!"

I froze on the spot and listened without moving an inch until a seemingly endless period of time was over and silence fell over the forest again.

Then my invisible angel said, "Hurry up, you must go quickly," and I moved on reluctantly.

As daylight approached I was close to the edge of the forest and I heard the whistle of a train blowing. I knew it was the train the guide told us to catch. Forgetting all safety precautions, I ran toward the train as fast as I could. The forest ended on the top of a hill and before me stretched a field of grass sprinkled with colorful wild flowers. As the little train wound its way through the valley I ran nonstop down the hill. The conductor saw me coming and slowed the train down just enough so I could jump up on the very last car.

Once I was safely aboard I turned around and looked back. There on the edge of the forest stood several border guards and their dogs. I knew they must have seen me running. Perhaps they too wished to be free.



Going to America

-4-

Six months after I left Leipzig I yearned to return

home, but the letters I received from my parents were discouraging and it appeared that I would not be able to go back for a long, long time. My dear friends in Munich were gracious hosts. They made my stay very pleasant, but I knew I could not accept their kind hospitality for too much longer. I needed a place to live and an income. I knew I had to make a decision, but I didn't know what to do so I called on God for help.

Dieter Kiehl, an antique dealer who I knew very well, told me he knew a lady who was planning to immigrate to America. She was a professional artist who knew how to repair antique porcelain. She said she would teach me the trade if I promised to buy her business when

she left. It was totally different from anything I'd ever done before, but I decided I should give it a try. I learned quickly. She soon left for America, and I had a flourishing business, a car and a condominium.

All my customers were New York antique dealers who, before shipping their collection of very expensive antique porcelain to the United States, came to me for both evaluation of their figurines and, if necessary, repair.

My American friends often explained to me that it would be much better for their businesses if I would move to New York. But immigrating to America was the last place I wanted to go as I was planning to return home to my family in Leipzig.

One day I received the shocking news that my mother was gravely ill. I immediately applied for an official visa to enter the German East Zone, but my request was denied. My father warned me not to return because I was considered a political refugee and would be arrested as soon as I crossed the border. I was devastated because I knew now it was impossible to go home again. I wondered, what God would do now? The answer came pretty soon.

Around that same time, a distant relative who had come from Chicago to study medicine in Munich was returning to the U.S. and he came to say goodbye to me after finishing his studies. I had helped him get settled when he first arrived in Germany.

I told him I was happy for him because he had a home to return to, then I started to cry and told him that I just found out that I could never go home again.

He tried to comfort me by suggesting that maybe I could leave Germany for a while and continue my studies in America.

He told me he would come by the next day and take me to the American Consulate where he would provide me with the affidavit I would need to be granted a student visa to immigrate to the U.S.

“Once you have your visa, then you can make up your mind to go or not to go,” he said.

His offer soothed my soul and I agreed to the plan. The next day we went to the consulate together. With the affidavit in my hand, he eased me in to the waiting room and left.

Until then every thing went kind-of mechanically. I enjoyed his company and he spoke about America in such a fascinating way that I looked forward to staying for a while in the country he loved so much.

But as I sat in the crowded waiting room, with many other young ladies, I slowly realized the enormity of what I was doing. The other women in the room chatted animatedly as if they all knew each other. They talked about visiting their relatives or friends and one even said she had a fiancé waiting for her. After a while, one of the women asked me about my plans. I told her that I planned to apply for a student visa, which I need immediately in order to arrive in New York in time to begin the fall semester.

My words caused the ladies to erupt in uproarious laughter. One woman said that I could not expect to get a visa that quickly, adding that she was there the seventh time with her application. Another young girl explained that she had been coming every month for almost two years and had always been rejected. All of them had a “long-wait” story to tell and as I listened to each one my hopes of ever going to America eroded a little bit more. When my name was called they all giggled and wished me good luck.

The consul's greeting was friendly. He was the first American to whom I had ever spoken. With my limited classroom English I tried to say some nice words.

He smiled while looking at my application and asked me in perfect German for the letter of acceptance from my university.

"What letter," I wondered. And then I explained to him that because New York has more than one university, I would need to be there to make my decision. "And, as a matter of fact," I added, "It is already August and the school year starts in September, so I need to go very soon."

He looked at me a long time while shaking his head. I thought that is it I never go to America. But to my surprise he gave me a paper and then he told me to get an immediate medical exam in the medical office downstairs. His advice was, I would be notified of the answer to my request for a visa at a later date. Only a few days passed and I received a letter informing me that my visa was ready.

This should have been good news, but for me it was more like a wake-up call. It dawned on me that I was making a very serious decision by leaving Germany to go someplace so very far away for nearly a year. I called my father and he and I analyzed the pros and cons of my plan to study in America. Together we agreed that I had been given a very special chance to experience something so potentially life-changing.

When I got home, my neighbors, a very nice older couple, asked me if I would like to go with them on a trip to Greece. Weighing my earlier decision against this new option, I thought it would be much easier for me to travel for several weeks with friends through the mountains of Yugoslavia to the southern tip of Greece, than it would be to cross a huge ocean all alone and live

far away for a long time in a country that, I'd heard in the waiting room of the consulate, was filled with people who were not particularly fond of German people. So I decided to travel with my friends.

When I came home from our adventure there was a letter from the consulate telling me to pick up my visa immediately or it would expire. I thought to myself that there was nothing I could do, and made plans to inform the consulate that I would not be going to America after all. But, that night I had a dream. I was sitting on the balcony of my condominium, looking into a star-spangled night. Suddenly, the black sky turned into a glittering ocean and far off in the distance I saw a coastline with a high and rocky cliff.

The sky then turned into a rich shade of orange found only in the most beautiful of sunsets. And in that glowing orange sky the word "FAHREN" appeared in gigantic fiery letters. This word, which means, "Drive On," looked and felt more than a word. It seemed to be a command. When I woke up, I knew with all certainty that God wanted me to go to America. While the destination was certain, I didn't know how I was going to pay for the trip. When I checked my finances, I found I had just enough in my savings account to pay my condominium rent for a year. I had nothing left for the journey. The use of credit cards, at that time was unheard of, and to borrow money, in my mind, was out of the question. Once again I felt that I had no choice but to give up my plan.

It was unusually early that morning when Dieter came to collect several figurines I had repaired. I told him about my dream and confessed that I felt like I was in a true dilemma. He replied quite casually, "I can buy your car and that will surely give you enough money to buy your fare to New York."

“My shiny, black Volkswagen, with the pretty red leather seats and convertible top? Never!” I cried.

But, I had to acknowledge the practicality of his suggestion and while doing so I saw the fiery letters in my mind’s eye. I quickly accepted his offer.

Dieter drove me to the consulate, and with the visa in my hand he took me to see his travel agent. As we drove, Dieter told me that before the war his parents had made a journey on an ocean liner to South Africa. He assured me it had been a wonderful journey. During all his talk, pictures of old movies with elegant ladies and gentleman strolling leisurely along the deck of an ocean liner and dancing and dining in one of the dazzling luxurious ballrooms glimmered before my eyes.

When we were discussing a round trip ticket to New York, I asked the travel agent about a cruise liner. She said she had just one ticket left, second-class on a Holland Italian ship.

“You will need to share the room with one lady and the ticket is not expensive because it is a very slow ship for leisure travel only,” she explained. “But the ship is leaving Saturday at five o’clock in the afternoon from Hamburg and today is Wednesday. Can you make it?”

“Yes she can,” said Dieter quickly.

With that, I purchased the ticket and he got the car. Saturday morning I boarded the express train to Hamburg with a few German Marks and \$10 in my pocket. When I arrived in Hamburg it was rainy and rather cold. I had nothing warm to wear. My American customers had always talked about the hot weather in New York and about how dresses and other clothes were very cheap at Klein’s on 14th Street, so I had given all my winter clothes to my girlfriends who helped me pack.

It was surprising to find out that it was so chilly in Hamburg at the end of August. But there was no time to

think about that. I had to grab a taxi to get to the ship on time. When I told the taxi driver to take me to the pier, a young man who was standing next to me said he was going there too, and asked to share the taxi with me. It turned out he had also studied for his doctorate degree in Munich and he knew John, my relative from Chicago, very well.

I short time later, we both stood together on the ship's deck, enjoying the soft warm breeze coming from the Gulf Stream while the pastel colored coast of Ireland passed before our eyes.

The cruise ship was large and comfortable, and the food was excellent. Yet, everything was quite different then I had expected.

Most of the passengers were retired men and women who had visited their relatives in Germany or vice versa.

The women spent their time sitting on deck and knitting, while the men played cards. Dinnertime was hardly as I'd imagined it, either. I was assigned to a dinner table, which consisted of a group of only Spanish speaking 12-year-old children who attended a private school in Mexico. This happened because my last name was the same as one if the children's and the Matre'd thought we were related. And there where no dancing. Soon after dinner, everyone went to sleep.

It turned out that the seating arrangement did not really matter. The soft swaying boat disturbed my balance and I was immediately seasick after I ate. I had to spend the first few days in my cabin until I finally became accustomed to the gently rolling sea. Then the weather changed and the ocean got choppy and everyone else on the ship got seasick, while I sat alone in the dining room where I was pampered with special treats.

This journey was my first encounter with people of the United States. I found, that in contrast to the people in Italy or Greece, they were not eager to socialize with a person like me who spoke minimal English. They avoided talking to me, but they did so in a friendly way. The lady in my cabin was nice, too. She tried to understand me, but she didn't like hearing that no one would be waiting for me upon our arrival in New York. She told me that the YWCA had a hotel for women only and gave me the address.

Fortunately, I had made another new friend on the ship, Dr. Eleotarius Shelinskas, with whom I frequently chatted. He gave me all kinds of useful information about New York.

He used a map to show me how to get around and explained to me the grid of Manhattan's streets. When he talked about his own life, he told me that he was happy to live in America. At the end of the World War II he was one of many thousands of refugees from Lithuania who streamed into Germany fleeing from Communist oppression. He was one of the lucky people who were permitted to immigrate to the U.S.

At the end of our journey on a cold and cloudy September morning, Eleotarius and I leaned on the railing on deck of the ship marveling at New York's majestic skyline. As the ship slowly entered the harbor, were we were greeted by the "first lady" that I and most other immigrants coming to the U.S. would see when arriving in the United States of America -- the Statue of Liberty.

The hustle and bustle of the embarking from the vessel gripped my attention, but there was no need for me to hurry. So, I was the last person to go through customs and the agent was amused when he looked

through my suitcase. A couple of other agents stepped over and saw I had very little clothes, but all kinds of tools and brushes for my porcelain repair business. As I tried to explain what I use my tools for, we were all laughing and chatting. Suddenly, I heard someone call my name.

“Hello Christina, come on already we are waiting for you,” the voice said.

To my surprise it was Mr. and Mrs. Martinenko, antique dealers from the Ukraine that I knew, who had immigrated to the U.S. because they thought Munich was too close to Russia. They had a great antique store right on Fifth Avenue. I was very happy that they had come to greet me, but I could not figure out who had informed them of my arrival and they never told me. But, what they did say was wonderful. Their friends Mr. and Mrs. Prutnikof had a room in their large apartment on Riverside Drive for me to rent and they took me there right away.

While I was very grateful for their help and thanked them for it, in my heart I was even more thankful to God for his help and foresight. I knew after my dream, that my journey to America was His will. When I finally obeyed that will, the Holy Spirit took care of my every step.

Two Prophetic Dreams

It was a cold, foggy September morning when I arrived in America. When the gray mist lifted like a curtain and revealed New York's majestic skyline, I fell in love at first sight. While driving from the city's pier to my new home on Riverside Drive I sensed that New York and all she had to offer would give me a new outlook on life. The powerful metropolis would never disappoint my initial expectations.

I didn't wait to get acclimated. On the first day of my arrival I explored the subway and took it to Union Square to inform several of my customers that I was ready for business. My landlady, the kind Mrs. Prutnikof, tried to help me in my quest to learn more about my new environment. However, she and her husband did not speak much English because they were refugees from Russia. She had been a ballerina at the Bolshoi Ballet and here husband had been an engineer. They where able to flee Russia with the help of the retreating German troops and had found a safe and pleasant new home in the U.S.

The busy month of September ended and I had decided to study at Hunter College. I also had sent a long letter to my parents, with photos included, describing with glowing words my impression of my new environment. With joy I explained that New York City had so much to offer that it seemed everyone's dreams could come true—even my own. I told them that I always looked forward to the next day and what it might bring my way.

On October 2, my birthday, I had to shop for all kinds of necessary items. First on my list was a winter coat. I had mistakenly thought that New York was warm all year-round, but I changed my mind rather quickly because it was truly chilly by then. To buy the coat I ventured to Macy's, the department store I knew from the movie *Miracle on 42 Street*.

When I showed the coat to Mrs. Prutnikof she was disappointed. It was a dull black coat that looked fit to wear to a funeral. Looking at the coat more closely I wondered to myself, "Why did I buy *this* coat?" I didn't even like the color black. We decided I would return it the next day.

She had made some tea and asked me to talk to her for a while, so I told her of a dream I had the night before.

Below:

**Margareta Froehlich-Schneider with daughter Christina
As painted by Christina Fez-Barrington**



In the dream
I was
walking
with my
mother on a
small path
on the
beautiful
grounds of a
castle. The
castle
looked
familiar and
I recalled
that it was
the castle
my parents
and I had

often visited on our family outings. In the dream it was many years later, and I was walking on the grounds of the castle, only this time I walked arm-in-arm with my mother. She looked frail and weak, but she smiled gently and was very glad to see me. The precious moments, walking and talking with my mother, were soon over and I woke up. My new friend said, "Perhaps God gave you a birthday present.

Because you cannot be with your mother in real life, he brought you together in spirit".

The following night I had another remarkable dream. I was walking on a dirt path over a plateau covered with green grass. When I came to the end of the plateau, I looked down and saw a village that had been ravaged by war and time. All of the village's houses were in ruins. After climbing down a steep, stony path I passed by an open doorway and I heard someone call my name, "Christl."

I looked into the old house and there in the shadows sat my mother. She looked bewildered, and she said, "I am so cold, did you bring my coat?" At that moment I knew I was holding in my hand my new black winter coat. With my help, she wrapped herself into that warm garment, but she was still shivering. I reached for her hand and we climbed over an array of debris and out of the house into the pale, yet warm, sunshine. Across the road, the clear water of a small stream glittered in the sunlight.

We strolled, happy to be together, along the banks of the little stream. My mother was moving so unusually slow that I asked her, "Mutti are you dead?" She gave me a pained and puzzled look and said, "Christl, I really don't know." I put my arm around her shoulder and held her tight. Slowly, my mother's expression changed, her face revealed a heavenly peace. Gradually she walked

faster appearing to get stronger with every step. Then with her face aglow she smiled at me, and I woke up.

Two days later I received a long letter from my father. He told me that my dear mother had died the night of October 2 at the very castle we had so often spent many happy hours together. It had been converted in to a hospital and he was there with her when she died. He also explained that he deliberately did not tell me that my mother was terminally ill for fear that I would try to come home illegally, which surely would have resulted in my arrest.

I know now that God in his mercy eased my pain and grief by showing me that the stream of living water had healed my dear mother's body and soul so she would be ready for the glories of her life with Him to come. Nevertheless, my newfound joy was dampened by her death. The following month I did what I had to do rather mechanically.

My customers gave me a lot of work to do. Also I began to study philosophy at Hunter College. To lift my spirits, I went to museums, cultural events and the city's many modern art galleries. It was all so exciting and new to me. Pop Art, the newest trend in visual art in the 50's and later the 60's fascinated me so much that I decided to switch my studies from philosophy to fine art.

Looking forward to a fresh, new goal gave me new direction and joy slowly returned to my heart. Full of enthusiasm, I got busy learning to become a painter and sculptor. I also signed up for a course called Fashion Illustration. I did not know much about that field, but thought it might be right for me. Little did I know just how right it would be?

One morning the monitor of that class ask me to pose. It just so happened that I had worn a fashionable little frock. The pretty outfit helped the students enjoy

sketching my poses all the more. After that, Parsons School of Design, and others, asked me to model for them. Before I knew it, I had a new way to make money and not a moment to soon.

Because New York's high buildings blocked the daylight I was used to working in, I had to repair my porcelain in electric light. Matching colors precisely requires lots of daylight and very sharp eyesight. For quite a while I knew my work was not as good as it used to be and that I needed eyeglasses. Finally, I had to give up my business.

But fortunately, God had made a way for me by directing me to a new vocation at just the right time. I was very grateful, indeed.

God Had Other Plans

My first winter in New York was on its way out.

When I looked straight out of my apartment window I saw the majestic Hudson River carrying the last ice sheets of the season to their final resting place – the Atlantic Ocean.

Looking down from my window, I saw an empty Victorian style villa surrounded by a lovely garden. The villa belonged to the Yeshiva, which was housed in a large building next door. Looking at it I thought to myself, “I need an art studio. Perhaps I could rent a room in that building.” Much to my surprise, when I talked to the Rabbi of the school he said I could rent the whole building month-to-month if I would take it as-is.

He gave me the key and I checked out the old house from top to bottom. The rooms had high ceilings and plenty of daylight, just right for an art studio. And the rent was very low. I simply could not say no. There was a lot of cleaning to do, but, with the help of my friend Harvey Rabiner, I set up my studio quickly and started to paint despite the cold. The place was too large for me to heat.

I invited my friend Anne Eberhard to visit me in my new studio. She was mightily impressed and told me that the villa reminded her of the very nice art school she attended when she was a little girl in Germany.

At once I wished that she had not mentioned the words “art school” because they triggered an idea in my mind that appeared to be just right, at the time.

I thought, it would be nice for some poor children from near bay Harlem to spend their summer vacation learning to paint and then playing in a pretty garden covered by shady trees.

The villa seemed like an ideal place for such a school. When I told Anne what I was thinking, she got excited and immediately offered to teach. Before she was married, Anne had been an art teacher and thought it would be fun to teach again, as did my friend Max Prager, a well-known artist from New Orleans.

Upon hearing my plans, my neighbor Frank knocked on the door of my studio. He told me in a very matter-of-fact that until he moved to Florida later that year, he would be of assistance to me.

“What can Frank do for me?” I wondered.

Unlike myself, Frank was aware that I would need a license to conduct a school and serve as a teacher. Before he retired, Frank had been a lawyer in the legal department of a big corporation. Lucky for my friends and I, he knew exactly what to do. With his help, we founded the *Manhattan Summer School of Art*, a New York-based, not-for-profit educational corporation.

With the summer fast approaching, we prepared to open the doors of our school when the regular schools closed for summer vacation. We did not plan to charge tuition.

The children only needed to bring their own art supplies. We devised an art contest and sent notices about it to a few schools in Harlem.

The art teachers there responded quickly and sent us many delightful little drawings from the children in their classes. It was extremely difficult for us to select the winners. Our biggest concern was whether or not the kids would behave in class, so we decided to select only a few.

In the end, we chose 10 boys and girls between the ages of 8- and 12-years-old. Later on in the summer some teenagers from the neighborhood joined our little group.

On opening day the children came to the school escorted by their mothers, and with the help of cookies and ice cream we all had a great time getting acquainted. To our delight the children behaved very well. They were attentive and really wanted to learn to paint. They worked hard and it was a joy to watch them so earnestly trying to do their best. We were astounded by their readiness to help keep every thing clean and tidy.

Unfortunately, my plan worked out very well for every one but for me. Running the school proved to be too much of a strain, even with the help of my friends. I realized too late that this was because it was not God's call for me to create the school. It was my idea and I pursued it despite God's many hints that I should not go ahead with my plans. I went ahead with everything because it made me feel like I was a "Do-Gooder." While everyone liked what I did, I missed several good modeling jobs and by the end of the summer I was in debt.

I had no idea how to get out of debt, but I hoped my friend Angelo could give me some help. A filmmaker, he lived in Greenwich Village. When I met with Angelo I told him that because the children were so happy and I wanted to offer the art school again next summer, I had extended my student - work-visa for another year. Also, a few teachers from the Art Students League had promised to teach in my school. I was really looking forward to the future, but at this moment I need to find the money I need to get out of debt.

Angelo did not help much, but there was a girl and a fellow in his studio who had an idea. The girl, Mary Travers of the famed singing group Peter, Paul and Mary, she was not famous yet, looked at her companion, and said, "What about you?"

He muted his head and said, "Your house is near Columbia University, I'm a student there and I would like to live close to the campus. Perhaps you could rent me some rooms?"

I contemplated his offer. I only needed my studio at the ground floor for the coming winter, and I really did not need the eight rooms on the upper floors. And there was even a separate entrance for him to use. I also thought that the Rabbi from the Yeshiva school would be happy to get some more rent for the building and perhaps together we could even manage to heat the house. It seemed like a good idea, so I agreed to show him the place.

The next day, totally unannounced and while I was busy teaching, the fellow came in and without saying much walked through the whole house from top to bottom. I told him he could have the rooms upstairs and I would keep the ground floor with all the tables, chairs and easels ready for the school next year. He was not very friendly, but he said, "Okay," and left.

The summer ended and our art school finished its first season. But before we all parted ways, we decided to get to gather for a picnic in the garden the following Sunday. My friend Harvey, who helped me to clean the building, and Mr. Charleston, who furnished the cookies and ice cream all summer long, along with Anne, Frank, Max, the mothers, brothers and sisters of our students were all invited.

We planned to give out certificates and prizes for the three best artists, which the children chose by voting for their favorites. Every one looked forward to this final, happy event.

Quite unexpectedly on Monday, however, my future renter called. He sounded desperate as he told me a story implying that a gang in downtown New York's Little Italy was after him. He said he had to leave his place there and move into the school building right away. It was a week too soon, but I did not see any harm in his early arrival, so I let him know that his key would be in the Rabbi's office.

At the end of the week I walked over to the schoolhouse to get ready for the party. As I got closer to the building, I noticed that all the window shades were down and the shutters on the ground floor were closed. I was bewildered. Adding to my growing confusion, I saw that eleven of my paintings were thrown in disarray on the ground near the garbage cans. They were the paintings I hoped to exhibit in September at an outdoor art show on the Village Square. I had worked on them all summer long and had only the twelfth painting to finish. To top it all off, my key to the front door did not fit. Huffing and puffing I ran over to the building of the Yeshiva and stormed into the Rabbi's office. He looked at me with wide eyes and said, "You are still here?"

"Yes, I'm still here! Why not?" I exclaimed. "And my key does not fit?"

The Rabbi quickly seemed to figure out what had happened, and seeing my angry expression he walked over to me and spoke very calmly. He told me that the "new tenant" had come to his office and said, "Christina had a death in her family and she left for Germany immediately. She will not come back."

“And then he gave me an envelope with your last month’s rent money,” he added.

I listened, utterly perplexed.

Then the Rabbi looked at me with great sympathy and with a sincere tone in his voice he continued to speak, “I really liked you there in the house. I liked to watch you and the children play in the garden and I liked your idea to teach children painting during the summer months.

It was all really very nice,” he said. “You know I supported your idea. But now I have signed a two-year lease with the tenant. I am very sorry that this happened.”

I turned away from him and left. There was nothing more to say. Still dazed, I walked over to the garbage cans, picked up my badly damaged paintings and carried them home with me. Mrs. Prutnikof who was always kind and caring made me a cup of steaming hot herbal tea, which helped me to sleep.

Early the next morning I called the fellow, whose name I have since forgotten, to find out when I could pick up my art supplies. He screamed back at me, “What art supplies? You mean all that smelly paint and junk you had lying around the house? That is long gone with the garbage. Don’t you dare come near the house and bother me!”

That conversation was the final blow. I lost all the certificates for the children, unfinished paintings, and several rolls of canvas, paint and paintbrushes, address books, office supplies and so much more. It was not the first time I lost all I had. Losing material things had never affected me much, but losing faith in the people of a country I was beginning to love so much was very troubling.

Reflecting on all that had transpired I realized that I should have known from the beginning that renting the house and forming an art-school in a country I had just arrived in was an undertaking that was way over my head. I had learned many times before that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, even hard work seems easy. But that had not been the case with that school. Every night I went to bed exhausted and I often fell asleep without praying the little prayer my mother had taught me when I was a little girl, and which I still pray today. Clearly the art school was not Gods will.

The unhappiest moment of all was yet to come. I had to tell everyone that the final party was cancelled, the school was closed for good and I would be packing up and heading back home to Germany after the Village Square art show.

The Accidents

Several months had passed since my good friend Harvey had helped me extend my visa for another year. When I told him I had changed my mind and wanted to return to Germany he was deeply disappointed. Every day thereafter he would call with another good reason for me to stay in New York. He simply did not want me to leave. But my mind was made up—after the Art Show at the Village Square I fully intended to pack my bags and go home.

On the first day of the show, Harvey came by to see my display, riding on his new scooter, a little Italian Vespa. It fetched him a lot of attention, which he enjoyed very much. When evening came, Harvey and I shared a pizza and he offered me a ride home. Riding on a Vespa was new to me, so I held on tight and kept my eyes on the road as we cruised up Park Avenue. I was just starting to enjoy the ride when we slowed down for a red light at an intersection and I saw a spot of oil on the road right ahead of us. Momentarily, I heard the voice of my guardian Angel behind me saying, “The scooter will slip on the oil; hang on loosely and then let go.”

The front wheel of the scooter hit the oil and the Vespa seemed to slowly swerve from left to right. I did what I was told to do and I let go of Harvey. As my body gently slid across Park Avenue in slow motion I felt as if I were wrapped firmly in two protective arms. When I came to a stop I heard Harvey calling, “little one”, so he called me endearing “are you hurt?”

“I don’t think so” I replied.

As I opened my eyes I was instantly alarmed because I saw a street full of cars coming straight towards us. I jumped up and pulled Harvey, who was sprawled on the ground to my surprise about five feet away from me, over to the sidewalk. People came running to help. When the cars had passed, a kind taxi driver came from across the street and offered to take us to the closest hospital.

On the way to the emergency room the driver told us he had witnessed the whole accident. He said it happened very fast and that there were many cars following close behind us. He could not believe that we were still alive.

His perception of what happened was totally contrary to my slow-motion experience.

The doctor in the emergency room said Harvey had a concussion and a broken elbow, and I thanked God that we both were still alive. The next day, I rushed to the hospital to find out if he was going to be all right, but he was acting very differently than the night before. Rather nonchalantly, he told me that he could not see me again because when his father learned that I was German he had flown into a rage. Harvey believed that if he continued to see me, his father would have a heart attack.

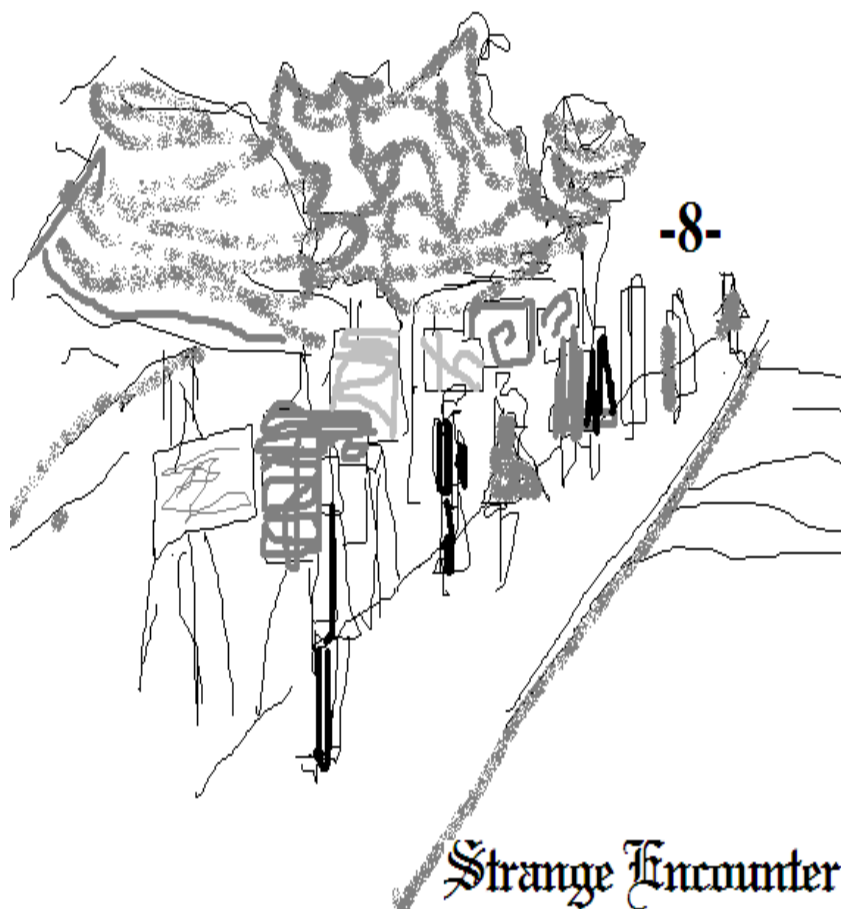
As I listened to Harvey talking, I realized that Harvey was not the only casualty of the accident. My body was fine, but my heart had been greatly injured. In addition to losing a dear friend, his words reminded me that some people in America—Jews and Gentiles alike—were eager to perpetuate the hate of World War II instead of doing what God asks us to do, to forgive one another.

It was not the first time that I was confronted with bigotry-driven hatred and it would not be the last. Periodically I had received threatening phone calls, telling me to leave the city at once. The callers told me “New York is a Jewish city and a place where Germans have no right to live.”

I can remember two other accidents in which I received help from my guardian Angel. The first time I heard the Angel’s calm voice was when I drove my Volkswagen through heavy traffic in Germany with a streetcar on my left and cars on my right. There, I heard my angel clearly saying, “Look in your rearview mirror. The car behind you will hit you. So, put your arms over your eyes.” Instantly, time seemed to slow down. I saw the car coming towards me and I covered my eyes just before the crash. The person in the other car was badly hurt, but I escaped without even the slightest injury.

Then later in America, I was driving slowly along the highway and noticed a car poised to cross the road in front of me in the distance ahead. As I neared the intersection, the car suddenly began to move. Again, I heard the soothing voice of my Angel, “You will hit that car, but you will not be hurt.”

As I had become custom by then, I experienced everything in slow motion, which in turn enabled me to take total control of my actions. Knowing that a truck and other cars were around me, I put my foot on the brake gently and I slid toward the big Lincoln as it slowly moved in front of me. When I hit its bumper, the big car whirled around like a top, coming to a stop next to a drainage ditch. Thanks be to God that the old man driving the car was uninjured. I was not even shaken up and was able to step calmly out of what was left of my car. It was a total wreck, but I hadn’t suffered even a scratch.



The outdoor art show was blessed with good weather, which brought many attendees. I had sold two paintings by Wednesday and hoped to sell more before the show closed on Sunday. That day, several friends came by and told me that a student from NYU was having an open house party in a nearby loft.

“We are going there right now,” they said. “Come over when you are finished here.”

I was too busy for parties, I also did not like these crowded happenings with loud music, beer and peanuts. Typically, I dismissed this kind of invitation, so I could not explain why I kept thinking about it. I finally decided that I might as well go.

When I opened the door to the huge loft, I was pleasantly surprised. Many people were there who were not from the usual crowd. Everyone appeared a bit more civilized amidst the backdrop of the floor to ceiling windows and their luxurious brocade curtains. And there were two marble fireplaces flanked by antique gas lamps on each side. Their flickering flames cast a romantic glow across the room and onto a set of beautiful baroque chairs in front of the fireplaces.

Adding to the courteous atmosphere of the place were two harpsichords and a baby grand piano on which someone was playing an interesting style of jazz. The environment caused several people to imagine that they were in a different era. My friend Ken began acting as a knight in shining armor and I took on the role of his princess.

Before we began our game, however, I asked Ken to introduce me to the host. It turned out that he was the man playing the piano. As always, I was polite and friendly. Unfortunately, the host was not. He did not even look up to say hello to me. I brushed his rudeness off and directed my attention to a grand medieval chair, which must have come from an old castle in someplace like Italy.

"I wonder which princess once sat in that chair," I said. "And what was she like?"

Ken looked at me for a moment and then he said, "Sit down and do not go away, I will be right back." He quickly returned with a hand full of paper napkins, which he had formed into a bouquet of white flowers. He got down on his knee and offered them to me. We had a truly delightful time improvising our royal roles for the rest of the night.

Early the next morning I got a phone call from Paul Lefson, the host of the party who had ignored me. He talked for a long time before I could say a word. Finally, I realized that he wanted to see me again, so I told him to meet me at the art show on the Village Square. Paul was already waiting when I arrived to set up my paintings.

Again, he did most of the talking, occasionally giving me some good marketing hints. He seemed to know a lot of people and spoke with several exhibitors and greeted people passing by. Interesting and witty, he explained that he was studying his last semester for his master's degree in business administration at NYU, adding that he also bought and sold antiques.

He asked me to have lunch with him, and, as he left for his class after lunch he told me he would pick me up for dinner. I found his behavior amusing. The next morning, Paul showed up again and asked me out for lunch and dinner. Because the university was right around the corner, he spent every free minute between classes at my stand. He was fun and entertaining and I enjoyed his company. And with his help, I sold three more paintings.

On Sunday, the last day of the show, he brought along his cousin Amy from Canada. Immediately, she and I struck up a relationship. We talked about culture and customs of Canada and Germany. She thought it would be nice for me to observe the costumes of Canadian Thanksgiving with her in Montreal. She explained that every year Paul visited her family on Thanksgiving.

"You can drive up with him and stay in my apartment," she said. Paul was staying for the weekend with her parents, who live in a townhouse down the block.

“No thank you,” I said with regret. “In a few weeks I will be returning to Germany.”

To my surprise Paul objected.

“No, you must not leave so soon,” he said with a trace of fear in his voice. His lively large brown eyes suddenly lost their perpetual smile and became very serious. He explained slowly and deliberately why it was absolutely essential that I visit Canada before returning to Germany. He was so convincing that I could not help but agree and I promised to postpone my departure. On the day of our trip, Paul picked me up long before the rush hour, with his nice, big, cushy Chrysler. That morning he was not as talkative as usual. Later, while we had our breakfast, he spoke earnestly and directly.

“Christina, I am in love with you. At the night of my party, when you sat in the chair playing the princess, I watched you. The room became strangely bright and then when you were receiving the paper bouquet so graciously, the napkins turned miraculously into a large bouquet of beautiful white roses. It was all so real to me. I knew instantly we belonged together,” he explained.

“When I was a little boy, a very pretty lady --I thought she was an angel-- told me that one day I would see a girl with a bouquet of white roses in her arms and that she would be the girl I would marry,” he said. “I never forgot her words.”

Looking at me with conviction, he said, “I know that girl is you”.

For a while I was speechless. I was convinced that he was sincere, but it was not at all what I had in mind. I wanted to go home. All the time we had been spending together, I had deliberately viewed him only as a charming and delightful friend. He was a few years younger than I, and had not yet finished his studies.

Like Harvey, he was Jewish, and I did not want to again be told, "I can not see you any more." He was very attractive, but I purposely kept my feelings in check. I tried at length to explain my objections to him.

Paul simply did not listen to anything I said. And to my amazement, throughout my talk I had the sinking feeling that God was also on Paul's side of the argument. So, I agreed that I would extend my stay in America a little longer. That was all Paul needed to hear to become his usual self again.

In the end, I was glad I had accepted the invitation to go to Canada for Thanksgiving. It was a delightful experience and I was sincerely grateful to Paul's cousin Amy and her family. After our return to New York, Paul continued to study, and so did I. Rosanna, the indispensable administrator of the Art Student's League was surprised to see me, because she knew I had planned to return to Germany.

Mary and Irving Lefson, Paul's parents who owned two nice adjacent brownstone houses in midtown Manhattan, invited us to dinner. It was a rather pleasant evening, but I noticed that while Paul treated his parents with respect, there was no love between them. He and his father were philosophically a world apart and I understood why Paul did not want to work in his father's advertising agency.

When Paul told his Mother we were planning to get married, she suggested that it would be better if we lived together for a little while first. Paul found a nice apartment in a brownstone building on the West Side near Lincoln Center and he expected me to move in with him.

But I told him I would not live with a boyfriend; so, we drove to a little town in Connecticut and got married.

My new parents-in-law were quite indifferent when they heard the news. My father was very glad to learn that I had found a husband and sent his blessings. But he still lived in Leipzig behind the Iron Curtain, and was truly sorry that because of the depressing Communist regime he could not do more for us.

Five happy years had passed. Paul and I were still very much in love and there was no sign that that would ever change. Paul had long ago earned his master's degree. After that he worked with his good friend Albert Nay, an inventor, on a new type of a rear-screen projector for photographers. It turned out to be a very successful product, which was produced on an assembly line in Paul's new factory in Chicago. Paul and I liked to be together as much as possible, so I helped him with his business.

Besides helping Paul I also had achieved a modest success as a sculptress. A few years earlier we had moved into an available apartment in one of the Lefson's brownstone buildings. I converted the basement of the building into a studio where I had ample space to create my exiting Plexiglas sculptures, which were totally different from anything currently in the fine art high-end market place.

Paul admired the way I followed my creative instinct. No other artist dared to use plastics in fine art at that time. While Paul loved all my work, he especially liked my abstract clear plastic sculptures. He enjoyed that I ventured into the unknown and had the courage to use a material that other artists considered cheap and commercially unacceptable.

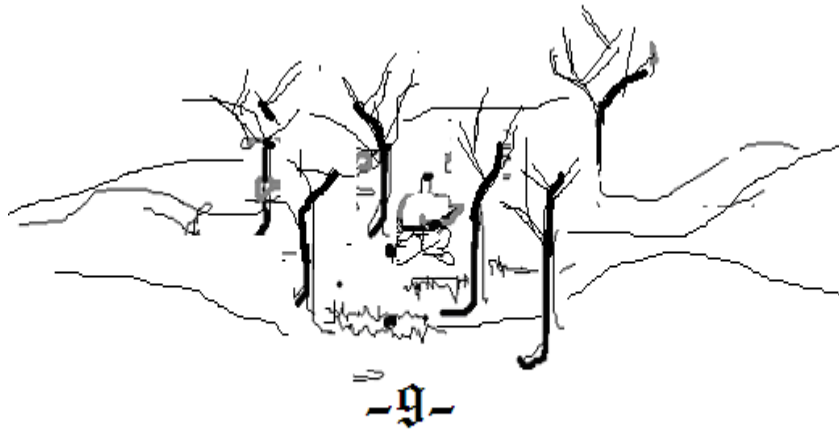
While I did not know why, I knew that I was called to use plastics. I was fascinated with Plexiglas, which had properties all its own. Its transparency and vibrant iridescent colors transformed my sculptures into a super-reality and added another dimension to them.

Two times in my life, my sculptures were part of a spiritual experience. The first time was shortly before Christmas. One of the 57th Street galleries that represented my work had used my sculptures to create a holiday window display. The star-like and wing-like shapes with their vivid iridescent colors invoked Heaven and angels, and the transparency of the Plexiglas in the proper light gave the display a festive glow.

I visited the gallery when the display was complete. The little Christmas tree I had made out of blue and green clear Plexiglas was the centerpiece. While standing at the window and critically examining my work, a little old lady next to me sad softly, yet with a bit of sadness in her voice, "This is all so beautiful, I love that pretty little tree, but I never could afford to buy some thing so lovely."

I was pleased that she liked the display and smiled at her in agreement. Then I went into the gallery to take care of some business. The entire time I was there, her words did not stop ringing in my ear. Finally I realized that God had sent an angel to test me. My heavenly father desired to know, if I could still hear His voice in the midst of my worldly success? And if I remembered His words, "*What you do to the least of mine, you do unto me?*"

I had heard the lady's praise, but I had not listened to her needs. I had failed the test. I should have given her the little tree, in the spirit of Christmas. But because of my neglect, both she and I missed out on so much joy. To this day, I regret that I failed the Lord's calling.



The End and a New Beginning

Not long after my encounter with the angel, which the Lord sent to test my ability to discern, He let a fallen angel test my faithfulness. Paul and I belonged to several charitable organizations. At one of the many events the group held, we met a very charismatic and charming young man named Peter. After our first meeting, it seemed that wherever we went he too appeared by chance. Even when we, in the spirit of the moment, decided to go out to dinner at a nice restaurant, Peter was there, much to our amazement.

His behavior was always polite, witty and informative. Both of us liked his company, even though he did not hide the fact that he had his eye on me. Nevertheless, everything Peter did was in good taste and Paul was amused when I diplomatically rebuked his slightly suggestive compliments.

Then one day, Paul had to go to Chicago. Paul and I liked each other's company and usually I accompanied him on business trips, but this trip came up at the last moment and I could not cancel an important appointment. So, I remained at home. No one knew that Paul had left except surprisingly, Peter.

When evening fell he came to my door and said, "Finally, we can be together." I was stunned at his bold advances, and I must admit his beguiling talk was very convincing. The modern world's liberal lifestyle permitted many trespasses.

And I was very tempted to do what most people do. I thought, Paul will never know, or if I tell him I know he will forgive me, so why not? After all, I reasoned, romance is the spice of life.

But, at the very moment I stopped thinking about myself, and thought instead about my dear husband, who loved and trusted me, I found it impossible to do something that would hurt his soul. Instantly it became easy to tell Peter to, "hit the road." With his face turning gray he left.

I guessed it must have been the first time he lost a prospect. We did not see him again. Under the watchful eyes of our guardian Angels, God lets it happen that bad spirits, or fallen angels test us. Sometimes we win, and sometimes we lose – but always we learn a lesson.

Meanwhile, the factory in Chicago was starting to produce Paul's rear screen projectors. We were ready to help Albert Nay, Paul's business partner, by relocating to the Windy City. The night before our departure I had a dream. Paul was sitting very still without clothes in a vast desert. Short, black scraggily trees without leaves stood around him, the sky was gray and nothing moved.

I felt very bewildered when I awoke shortly after midnight; just about the same time Paul also had a nightmare. He told me he had dreamt that, “a bony hand had reached for him and tried to pull him from the bed and onto the ground.” We comforted each other by dismissing all negative thoughts and then fell asleep again.

On our drive to Chicago, Paul turned to me suddenly and said, “I would be very unhappy if I died before I had a chance to help to make the world a better place.” We talked about that till we got to our favorite hotel in the middle of the city.

The next morning Paul got up early to go to the factory. I stayed in the hotel to check the newspaper for ads of available houses and to call some realtors. Paul promised to return right after his luncheon appointment with a customer and then, he said, “We will go house-hunting.” But it was not yet 11 a.m. when my husband came back to the room. I was surprised, but so happy to see him. “I cannot stay,” he said, adding, “I just wanted to see you,” as he held me tightly.

“Some equipment has arrived. I need to go back to the factory,” he said, hesitating to leave. He gave me one more embrace before he left. This was the last time I saw my dear husband alive. Two hours later, a very kind couple came to visit me and told me that my husband had suffered a fatal accident. He had touched a high-powered strobe light and was electrocuted.

My reaction was simple, I had told Paul the day before that I would not live without him if he died. Therefore consequently, without any hesitation, I turned toward the window and in all earnestness was ready to jump. But no matter, I could not walk. It was as if there was an invisible person behind me stopping me from my attempt to jump.

Then that person touched my back and I felt as if a warm fluid was running up my spine. From that moment on I experienced a peace beyond my understanding. For myself I had no more desire, no wishes, no emotions, no needs, yet I had a feeling of perfect freedom and confidence. The Holy Spirit had freed me from all earthly burdens. However, at the same time I had, not a feeling, but a knowing, of great sorrow. My dear loving husband Paul died so young and I could not stop thinking that his wish to accomplish something meaningful in life before his death would never come true now. My heart was filled with Paul's grief.

Customers came to the hotel to pay their respects and told me how kind and helpful Paul was to them. They comforted me, but they could not reduce my grief. Whatever I did, I did mechanically. I did not talk. I did not cry. I did not feel. I did not want. I did not eat. Therefore, when Paul's father came storming into the hotel room and without even greeting me, said, "I want you to know the business is mine," and then turned and left, it did not hurt at all. And, I did not feel any anger when I came home and found that everything of value was removed from our apartment with the explanation that, since Paul had not made a final will, half of our possessions belonged to his parents. It did not matter to me at all. There was nothing I cared for. My only thought was of Paul, Paul, Paul, my dear, poor Paul.

For days I sat from morning to night on top of our bed. It was my favorite place, because before our bedroom window stretched the crown of a beautiful tree in which many birds "*froehliged*" and sang praises to God. I recalled sadly, even though I had prayed my little prayer my mother had taught me every night, that Paul and I had not cared much for God. But God in His infinite love, still cared for me.

One morning I was sitting as usual on my favorite spot, looking through my little prism tube. I was turning it around and around, when suddenly the bedroom became filled with a bright white haze. And in that haze Paul appeared, looking exactly as I had seen him the last time. I stepped into his open arms. His touch felt real, as if he was alive. And just for a while we held each other tightly. Then Paul asked, "Chris, what did we do?"

He was puzzled. It appeared he did not know what had happened to him. All I could say was, "Oh, Paul, my dear, dear Paul," as I held him as tightly as I could. Then a person that seemed to form from the haze filling the room, enveloped Paul gently, and together they flew through the window and disappeared. My thoughts immediately centered on the extraordinary miracle, which just had happened. With my worldly mind, it was hard to comprehend that my dear vibrant and energetic husband, being dead and already cremated, had just come to me in a tangible body, seemingly alive as ever.

I remembered the Bible telling us how the Lord Jesus Christ had died on the cross for our sins, but after his resurrection the Lord appeared many times to his disciples. Now that God in his grace gave me the privilege to witness my husband's return, I knew that the promise our Lord Jesus Christ had given was true. And I was ashamed that I had been neglecting my Christian beliefs. I knew then without any doubt that all of us will get a new body and have everlasting life. But the Bible teaches there are two places to go with that body -- Heaven or Hell -- and the choice is ours to make.

After Paul's death, my parent's in-law, were very hostile toward me so I felt it was best to give up my apartment, which was in the same building as theirs, and move away. It was time to start a new chapter in my life.

I decided to study fine art at Columbia University and move into the nearby International House, a kind of hotel for foreign students on Riverside Drive.

It was a very desirable place to live and I was wondering whether I would be accepted or be put on the waiting list. But when I came to apply, President Howard Cook and Dr. Taylor kindly and graciously let me move in at once. I felt immediately at home and knew my decision was in God's will.

Miraculous Happenings

After Paul's death, I knew that I was in God's protective hands, but I could not understand why my feelings, the very few I was having, were so different than one might expect. I wondered, where were my tears? Where was my grief? I had no desires. I could think about only one thing and one thing only "my poor Paul." I did not know how blessed I was by the fact that, after Paul died, I had died to the world. My "death" freed me from all of my usual wishes and feelings. My mind was empty. Because of that, the Holy Spirit was better able to rule my life. My decisions to continue my studies of fine art at Columbia University and to move into the International House (I-House) on Riverside Drive in New York City were truly the working of the Holy Spirit in my life.

Living in the I-House, with its lively mixture of graduate students from all over the world helped me move beyond my initial shock. The entire time I lived there, I lived in the moment. After a task was done, I looked at the world around me anew, as if with the eyes of a little child. And just as their parents take care of little children by anticipating their needs so I was cared for by the Holy Spirit and my Angels; they were with me all the way.

Evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence came in many forms. On the day of my move into I-House, its president, the kind and observant Howard Cook saw my sculptures.

Without me asking, he immediately allocated a large space in a storage area of the building for me to use as a studio. And the charismatic vice president, Dr. Tailor, arranged for a very successful one-woman show of my sculptures a year later. My works were displayed on the second floor of the I-House and Dr. Tailor invited David D. Rockefeller, John Mc Cloy, and other dignitaries to my Opening Night.

In that period in my life I did my daily chores quite automatic. But here and there the Lord roused my spirit with a special event and any success I enjoyed came without me even trying.

One afternoon I was on the terrace of I-House and sipping my coffee when I noticed a young man sitting at the next table reading a newspaper. On the back of the paper there was a big ad announcing that Miriam Makeba would be singing in a nightclub in Greenwich Village that night.

I thought, matter-of-factly, that if Paul were alive we would go and see her. To my surprise a glimpse of desire aroused in me and I wanted to go to the show. In that same moment, the young man put his paper down and said, I'd like to go see Miriam Makeba, would you be interested in joining me? Because so many strange things had happened to me after Paul's death, I was more amused than I was perplexed by what had just happened. I found out that the young man had lived in the I-House before and was now a medical doctor. He was leaving the next day on a mission to Africa. That night, however, he wanted to see the African singer. He was very happy when I agreed to keep him company.

There was another occasion when the Holy Spirit fulfilled my slightest spark of desire. It happened when I delivered some small sculptures to my gallery on 57th Street. Frank, the owner of the Frank Laurence gallery, was talking to a gentleman about the grand opening night of the new Huntington-Hartford Museum. It was supposed to be the most elegant gala event of the season. While listening to their chat, I was unwrapping my sculptures on the other side of the gallery and contemplated how important it would be for me, as an aspiring sculptress, to attend an event like that.

Knowing it was impossible for me to go, I tried to put that thought out of my mind, when Frank handed me an envelope. It was an invitation to the opening. His gesture was totally unexpected and very wonderful, but to my dismay I had to decline, because I did not have the proper attire for such an occasion. No matter, though, because with God all things are possible.

It just so happened that the gentleman in the gallery was the publicity chairman of the Huntington-Hartford museum.

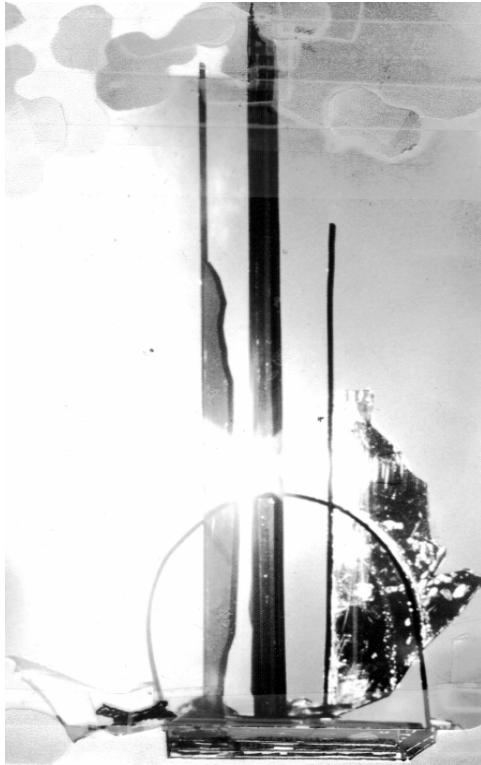
Hearing my predicament, he said, “Never mind, there is that dress shop and I know the owner. She is Zsa Zsa Gabor’s mother and she often lends clothes to models, when they go to gala openings. I will let them know you are coming.”

Still I hesitated, “I have no escort.”

“No problem,” Frank replied, “my friend who is curator for the Metropolitan Museum, can take you. He knows everybody. You go with him and you will have a good time.” And so it was. I had a wonderful experience and after that it looked as if my life would be that of a successful sculptress and all sorts of good things came my way easily.

David Rockefeller considered putting one of my sculptures in Chase Manhattan Plaza downtown. Rena Rosenthal, a gallery on Madison Avenue sold my unique metal trees. I worked with Andy Warhol, Rauschenberg and others on a project called Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.). And my friend, Max Waldman, a photographer for Life Magazine, took beautiful photos of my artwork. But I soon found out fame and fortune was not at all that God had in store for me. One early morning while I was working on my sculptures, Joseph, a student from India, came in to my I-House studio and proudly announced, “Christina tonight there is going to be a fabulous party in the Village, please come with us, everybody is going.”

Below: Christina’s Plexiglass sculpture



To me, parties were not of much interest and a simple, “No thank you,” was all I had to say to be left alone. But this time it did not work. Joseph was determined to get me to that party.

Many times throughout the day he came to the studio with his friends to persuade me to go. He and the others overcame every objection I had and, finally, about six of my Indian friends and I

drove in a little car to Greenwich Village. The party was in a tenement house on Christopher Street. In each of its flats lived students from both New York and Columbia universities.

Every apartment from top to bottom was open for guests and each was decorated in a happy party theme. When we arrived, hundreds of people were already there. To get a drink, one needed to climb up to the top floor. When I arrived huffing and puffing, a friendly young man with penetrating brown eyes said, "I guess you need a drink." And he passed me a glass of white wine, so kindly and gently that I took a liking to him right away. Then he suggested that we check out the other flats and we walked down the crowded stairs to the third floor.

The door to an apartment was wide open. There was a corner room with several windows. Even with so many people crowded around behind me, the room seemed to be strangely empty and filled with a translucent white haze. Near the window, there was a couple talking to a tall, nice looking man. When I stood in the doorway, he turned to me and smiled and said, "Hello," with a resounding voice.

I walked straight over to him. As I walked across the room I heard very clearly a person saying, "This is your husband." I thought it was my new friend, but when I looked around he was still standing at the entrance, smiling and waving good-bye and then he was gone. In that moment it was as if I woke up. The whole smoke filled room was full of noisy chatting people and the smiling man said, "My name is Barie." And, yes, he did become my husband.

Pentecost Again

Throughout my life God cared for me, but until a sunny afternoon in 1973, I cannot say I truly cared for him. I believed in God. I even faithfully prayed my evening prayer. And when I got married I loved to talk about God with my husband. Occasionally, we attended a Lutheran Church Service. Still, God was far away from both of us and Jesus Christ did not live in our hearts.

No matter what God did to capture our attention, we would attribute the most miraculous happenings in our lives to anything but Him, the Holy Spirit or His angels. Not even dear Pastor Bergen, from the Grace English Lutheran Church in Puerto Rico, who had such a profound influence in my husband's life, could change our attitude. But God, in His infinite love did not give up on us.

It was a sunny day in New York City. For weeks I had been packing and preparing our household goods in our loft in upper Manhattan for our move to Tennessee. All that remained to be packed were our office items. And some of my sculptures were still standing in the room, waiting to be sent to various destinations. It was a quiet day in the studio, not at all like before, when I was frantically running up and down the stairs in the loft. My husband, who was already in Tennessee, used one part of the loft for his architectural office. I used the other part as an art studio where I created my Plexiglas sculptures.

Until now, our place had been filled with people and activities, so much so, that I was worried I would never finish the packing and sorting by the time the moving day arrived. To my relief, by that hot afternoon I had accomplished most of the work and all was still. Trying to collect my thoughts and plan for the duties ahead of me, I leaned against the open doorjamb between the reception area and the drafting room. But my mind was not willing to stay on task.

Instead my thoughts repeatedly turned to my life and my relationship to God. I wondered why all these thoughts were whirling around in my head, but I could not find an answer. Though it was early, I felt tired all of a sudden and I decided to take a nap. After only a few hours of sleep, I woke up and turned on the television.

On the screen I saw a man talking to an audience. It looked boring and I was ready to turn the channel, but I hesitated and listened. He was talking about Jesus. I had never seen someone preaching on a stage like he was -- swinging a microphone in one hand and holding a bible in the other. I had always seen pastors standing with dignity behind a pulpit while preaching the gospel. I did not like the man on TV the way he was preaching, but the words he spoke were so powerful that I closed my eyes and listened. It was as if I heard the words of the Bible for the first time. The preacher made it very clear why one must be "born again." With conviction, I joined him in his closing prayer and surrendered myself to Jesus. I knew I had come finally home to my loving Father God - - I was saved.

The next morning I woke up with a new feeling in my heart. All day long I pondered the words I had heard the night before. Thanks to the pastors preaching, the Bible had become alive. I wondered why it had taken so long for me to know that the word of God is our reality.

Now that this had become clear the peace that entered and surpassed all understanding gave a new meaning to my life.

As the day progressed, I noticed that there were no phone calls or visitors – and I didn't hear the usual pounding of the machines coming from the bread factory on the first floor.

Later that afternoon, I got up from the office chair where Theresa our receptionist usually sat and stepped into the large drafting room.

All at once, a mighty wind blew into the office and I felt it move through my body. The great wind filled the space with such power that the walls, in order not to burst, stretched like a rubber balloon. Even though it moved the walls, the papers and letters in the room did not move even an inch.

I also did not move I just stood there in awe.

The wind blew through me three times, shaking my insides like laundry in a washing machine.

Each time the wind blew it was accompanied by a powerful humming sound, resembling the lowest tone of an organ in a large cathedral, or the foghorn of an ocean liner.

While the great wind and its mighty hum filled the loft, I observed with wide-open eyes that my Plexiglas sculptures were edged by a border of brilliant light exactly the color and brightness of a lightning bolt against the black clouds of a thunderstorm. And I saw tiny blue-white flames that resembled the Bible's tongues of fire dance up my arms to my head. I knew I was in God's presence. I wished in my heart that this intimate time with God would never end, but all too soon it faded away. The loft grew dark and from that moment on there was a hush around the place, which lasted until I left New York to join my husband in Tennessee.

While I knew about the day of Pentecost and that God had a plan for me from reading the Bible, I never *really* believed that the Holy Spirit who was sent to the disciples would come to bless me in the same way. But, when I told my husband about my experience with the powerful wind, he explained to me that God is not a discerner of persons.

Understanding that, a wonderful feeling of “Geborgenheit,” the assurance of being sheltered in God’s loving presence, strength and power, which I had experienced personally in the loft, came over me. I realized then that I could do with joy the work the Lord planned to place before me in my life because I had been born again.

And I was baptized in to the Holy Spirit.

Unlike before, God now had my full attention. I knew in my heart that He was fully in charge of my life, without me having to sacrifice my free will. I also knew I would obey the Holy Spirit and accept His gentle direction for the rest of my life to come.



Getting Married the Third Time

Several years had passed. My husband Barie had accomplished much in his professional life, but he did not yet give God credit for his good fortune and many opportunities. We had moved from Houston to College Station, Texas, because Barie had been appointed Professor of Architecture at Texas A&M.

It was a dream come true for him because he loved to teach. It was also very nice for me because College Station had cable TV with really good Christian programming. I spent much of my days listening to the Word of God and studying the Bible.

One day I made a small donation to one of the programs for which I received a little pin in the mail. The tiny pin said, "Jesus First." I put it on Barie's shirt. Ricky, a very friendly student in my husband's class noticed the pin and asked Barie where he went to church. Barie quickly told him that we attended the Lutheran church. However, he neglected to say that we went only on Holy holidays.

Ricky must have sensed something was amiss because early the following Sunday morning he was standing at our door -- smiling, bright-eyed and inviting us to come with him to his church. It was very hard for Barie to say no to one of his students, especially when he looked so confident. So, hiding our unwillingness, we went to Ricky's church.

As soon as we got there, we felt like running away. From the outside the place looked drab and seedy. It was in a store in a deserted section of town. But when we got inside there where many friendly young people and most of them were Barie's students. They all gave us big smiles. They were so happy to see us that we could do nothing but surrender.

The service was good. Worship music was great. The preacher was a fine and kind older man. The little Pentecostal church was full of love and energy. We returned the following Sunday and the Sunday after that, and it did not take long before Barie was "born again."

Soon after he gave his life to Jesus, Barie was offered a very special architectural position with ARAMCO, the Saudi Arabian American Oil Company. Barie accepted that job gladly because we were convinced that going to Saudi Arabia was God's will for us. There was only one problem. In order for us to go together to Saudi Arabia we had to get a visa, which required us to produce our marriage license. To our dismay, we could not find our original marriage certificate.

Barie and I had been married twelve years earlier in New Haven, Connecticut. When I called the license office to request a copy of the license, I was shocked to hear that they could not send it immediately. They were in process of computerizing all of their documents and it was going to take about three to four months to get it.

We felt helpless and very unhappy. Even, Barie, who never gives up, was discouraged. The situation looked impossible, but all was not lost. Someone suggested that we get married again. It was a great idea, but how? It was already Friday, and Monday was the last day we could get the necessary visa in order to leave on time for Barie to start his new job. It was simply too late. But Barie was not to be deterred.

“Let’s go to city hall and let us try to get a marriage license,” he said. We got there just before closing time and picked up our license, but to our disappointment there was no judge available to marry us. Ricky, who had come along with us said, “No problem, our pastor can marry you on Sunday at church.” It was a great idea that left us wondering, why didn’t we think of that before?

Sunday morning, when we got to our little storefront church as usual, we wondered why the door was not open? Where were the greeters who usually stood at the door? The church looked closed. Cautiously, we opened the door and to our surprise, the whole congregation was already assembled and waiting to greet us with a joyful noise. The room was nicely decorated and there was a huge wedding cake sitting on a table draped in a white lace tablecloth.

A little girl gave me a lovely bouquet of flowers. And Ricky led us to the altar, where our spirit-filled pastor joyfully performed the wedding ceremony. We were so elated, because this time we had a real wedding that was blessed by God.

My thoughts drifted back on our uneventful wedding day years ago, when Barie was still a student at Yale University. My father had sent us his heartfelt blessings, which was all he could do because he still lived behind the iron curtain.

Barie's family did not send any well wishes, but his father gave us \$15 to go and have a Chinese dinner.

But this time, thanks to what looked to be unfortunate circumstances at first, we had a wedding blessed by our provident Father in heaven who wanted to bless our marriage before going to a part of the world which is hostile to Christians. Here in Texas we had a kind and caring church family surrounding us. There was so much love and joy in that little room that we were convinced that a wedding at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City could not have made us happier than we were on that Sunday morning in our storefront church in the little town of Bryan, Texas.

Soon we left for Saudi Arabia. We had heard that the kingdom in the desert did not welcome any other religion but their own. Christian churches did not exist, and missionaries were not allowed to enter that country. So, God appointed men and women, who already were in that Kingdom, to preach and teach His Word to the Christian community. And to our joy, after a few years we realized that we had become leaders in His mission field without asking for it. God simply had drafted us in to His army of Christ.

Now we understood, God in His providence knew His plans for us. God knew He would ask much of us in the future and there would be danger, trials and many difficulties.

That is way He filled us with the Holy Spirit before leaving the United States and gave us no choice but to be married again, this time in a church where He could give us His special blessings. During our time in Saudi Arabia God in His love turned all our sacrifices into spiritual victory.



In Riyadh, our two Philippino houseboys serve dinner

-13-

God Knows Best

Living in Saudi Arabia was a blessing in disguise. While working with people from different countries and cultures often made the tasks we were there to accomplish difficult and challenging, we learned that God and the Holy Spirit could do much to ease our burden. So we felt the presence of our Lord more than ever before.

After the contract with ARAMCO ended we moved to Riyadh. There, to our dismay, we were unable to find a group of Christians. In the Saudi Kingdom's capitol, the Mullahs, self-proclaimed religious police, had even more control than elsewhere.

Rather unexpectedly, however, we received good news. It came when I asked our houseboys to serve brunch for a few guests on a Friday. The boys refused. Friday was the equivalent of Sunday for a Christian in Muslim countries. It was usually our houseboy's day off, but I was confused.

Our nice Filipino boys never said no to any thing I asked them to do so I wondered, what was the matter? I had to ask many times why they were not willing to serve. They hesitated at first, but finally said they could not work because this was the day when they served the Lord.

I was puzzled. "Where and with whom?" I asked. They hesitated again and only when I assured them we were Christians, they pointed to the villa across the street. To us the big two-story villa with its high wall around and its windows all boarded looked deserted, yet every Friday, the boys told us, more then a hundred people entered that building. Christians from many countries and all different denominations came faithfully together to worship the Lord Jesus Christ. We did not see what was going on across the street, because the Holy Spirit protected the worshipers and blinded our eyes and the eyes of the people living around us.

We knew we were guests in a Kingdom that had no religious freedom and it was right for us to respect their laws and adhere to their customs, but at the same time we could not neglect our Lord Jesus Christ. We knew that we must practice our Christian faith. It was difficult to walk that fine line, and only with the guidance of the Holy Spirit could we keep our balance. Sadly there were many other Christian groups that were raided and their leaders imprisoned.



AL-Kharj desert where we were all filled with the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit reigned supreme in Saudi Arabia. The country's Christian groups were the pillars holding up the Holy Spirit, which stretched like a protective tent over that desert kingdom. We knew that as long as this spiritual tent was intact, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would be save and Gods Kingdom would prosper in it.

We went with the boys to church on Friday. What followed was a spiritually prosperous time with our Christian brothers and sisters.

However, the worldly business in Saudi Arabia was apparently grinding slowly to a halt and most Americans felt as if they had overstayed their welcome. Therefore, Barie and I decided it would be best to establish a home base in the United States just in case it was necessary suddenly to leave our host country.

The U.S. has many beautiful places to live so we wondered where to settle. Our friend Gene lived in Miami. He suggested that we might find a nice vacation house in Florida. We were of the same mind. Not long ago I had found a small advertisement in an Austrian newspaper saying, "Come to Lehigh Acres in Sunny Florida." We decided to give it a try.

I left for Florida, their Linda and Gene proved to be great hosts and dear helpful friends. They hoped I would find a suitable house near theirs. But for some reason I was drawn to Lehigh Acres, a newly developed little town next to Fort Myers on the southwest coast of Florida. But getting to Lehigh was not an easy task for me.

I had to cross the Everglades on a tight two-lane highway called Alligator Alley. It was eerie. At that time there where no cars on the road, I was alone, dark clouds loomed in the distance, and soon I was greeted by deep rumbling thunder and sheets of rain that thrashed my car and windshield.

As suddenly as the clouds had appeared, the weather changed and the sun lit up the large expanse of the Everglades again.

When I turned to enter Route 29 there was a Panther Crossing sign. "Where am I?" I wondered.

I started to feel like there was too much wilderness around me and I had better go back to Miami. But when I finally reached my destination, I found the little town rather nice.

There was a church on almost every corner, so I concluded that Lehigh couldn't be such a bad place. I decided to rent at first a lovely house with a swimming pool and then find a builder who could build us a house incorporating our ideas -- after all, my husband was an architect.

Since I had worked with Barie in our New York architect's office, I knew exactly what I could expect from a builder. To my disappointment I found out very quickly that to build a house to our specifications was not advisable. This was because builders in the area, at that time were not exactly honest or competent. So I decided to wait for Christmas when Barie would join me in Florida on his vacation.

Barie arrived a few days before Christmas. To my great pleasure he was on fire for the Lord. He came with good news. All the Christian groups in the Middle East experienced a tremendous revival. The underground Christian theological school in Riyadh, where Barie taught had received many more students. On holidays, thousands of men, women and children gathered in a secluded place, deep in the desert to worship the Lord all day long with music, singing, food and fun. It was as if the seeds which were sown in the past years were growing and bearing fruit.

There was only one problem. Barie was not at all interested in our new house or builders or anything I needed his help with, he only wanted to talk about the marvelous works the Lord had done in a country that was so hostile to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Because the Lord directed us to live in Southwest Florida, which is part of the Bible belt, many kindred souls joyfully shared Barie's interesting talk, especially our neighbor Gene Nicholson, a devoted missionary to India, Barbara Thomas loved to share with Barie God inspired stories. However, we had three major problems.

First, we could not be very specific about our mission's location when speaking in churches or on radio shows, in order not to endanger those involved. Secondly, we could not invite or receive outsiders to visit our mission in Saudi.

Therefore fundraising was practically impossible. Thirdly, no one wanted to be accountable for missionaries who had to work secretly and underground in the country they were serving. This was the reason the mission became our own financial responsibility. But we were blessed in many other ways.

The Bateman brothers, two men who truly loved to serve the Lord, drove us to Gospel Crusades, which is a well-known Christian retreat in Bradenton, Florida. Rev. Gerald Derstine, the founder of Gospel Crusade who always listened to God's Will, ordained us later as ministers of the gospel. At the retreat we also were introduced to Dr. Don Strubel, who was at that time very instrumental to the great success of Gospel Crusade's Ministerial Fellowship, together with the kind and caring brother Luke Weaver we found welcome spiritual protection under their umbrella of prayer. During our short time in Florida, the very inquisitive president of Full Gospel Businessmen Fellowship International in Naples, Larry Hammond, invited my husband to talk about our experiences in Saudi Arabia. And there at that meeting, we made a new friend Scott, and his dear wife Gisela, who became our friends and prayer partners to this day.

Then, all too soon, Barie had to return to the Middle East, and I was alone wondering again what to do. Totally discouraged, I thought it was best to put our belongings into storage and join Barie in Saudi. But before that I prayed, hoping that God would help me to make the right decision. And so He did. While I prayed it appeared as if God was telling me to move into a trailer. I thought,

“Oh no God, you know I cannot do that, remember, my husband is a architect.” God insisted, “Get a trailer.”

I knew Lehigh Acres did not allow trailer parks, so I had to look elsewhere. With some resentment I reached for the phonebook. To my surprise I did not need to search long. I opened the book and there before me was a full-page advertisement:

“Beautiful Country Club on Route 41, Prefabricated Homes”.

I decided to take a look and see for myself. To get to Route 41 I had to cross Interstate 75 and head north of Ft. Myers to a place that was surrounded by forests and pastures. I found the richly landscaped country club in a new lush and green development. The houses in that gated community were small vacation homes, but they looked very pretty and not at all like trailers. It was also very easy to buy a place there.

There were no hidden costs and no double-talk, I was able to move into my new house within a few months, just as Peter Canevas, the very cheerful and imaginative developer, who also lived in the club, had promised.

When every thing I plan is going smooth and easy, I know I am doing the will of God. That is the way I knew my decision was right for us. After all it was not my choice, I just listened to the Lord and trusted that he knew best. After I moved into my new home I was plenty busy. I wanted to get the house into ship-shape for Barie’s next visit. We had never been apart so long and I could hardly wait for the time of his arrival.

Finally that wonderful day came, but there was still one hurdle to overcome. I had sent the mortgage papers to Saudi Arabia for Barie to sign. When he had glanced at the papers he called me immediately saying:

“You do not know what you are doing. This is not the right kind of a house for us. Get rid of it. If you don’t do it, I will when I come home.”

That was not what I wanted to hear, but I was confident my husband would see it my way . . . after all, It was God's will.

When Barie saw the place for the first time he was not exactly happy, but he agreed that it was a convenient vacation home and a perfect temporary refuge if we ever needed it. To our amazement it did not take long to witness that God's divine providence not only chose the house to meet our immediate needs, but also to meet the needs of the people who needed us.

Barie arrived from Saudi Arabia just in time for the Christmas Tree Lighting event at the Clubhouse. Before he had left Saudi Arabia he secured several challenging consultant positions because both of us had planned to return right after the New Year.

When it was time to inform everyone exactly when we would be arriving back in Saudi, we were preempted by a telephone call from the desert Kingdom. The voice on the other end of the phone said, "Barie do not return to the Middle East."

"Why?" we asked, bewildered. But there was no clear answer.

Shortly after that, all the companies that had offered a consultant position to Barie called, also warning him not to return to the Middle East. What was going on? We tried to get an answer, but it was impossible. We came to the conclusion not to ask any more questions but to accept the fact that we had to stay in Florida. This made us happy that we now owned our little vacation house, which God had chosen for us. In addition we wondered why God had chosen this particular development; well the answer came very soon.

My new dear friend Dori, the leader of the women's Bible study group and a very specially gifted prayer worrier came to us and said, "Reverend Barie, there is no church in our neighborhood and many people in this community would like to have a Sunday church service in the clubhouse. You are ordained, would you like to be our pastor?" Barie was honored and gladly accepted the responsibility of being the pastor to our new community.

Finally, we knew why we were here. Pasturing that church made one thing clear to us, God had chosen our home in this community so that we could serve Him, and the people could choose us to serve them with the word of God. Right at the beginning the church service was well attended. We called it "Christian Fellowship." There were also Bible studies and potluck dinners, most helpful where the Klies, Gloria, Betty and Bosh Pritchard and so many others. All of us who enjoyed that fellowship came closer to the Lord as time went on, especially dear Dori, who is now with God and her husband Joseph, who still serves the Lord with us to day. It was a blessed time for all.

We truly enjoyed living in Florida and the Middle East was becoming just a memory when suddenly it jumped out of the past and demanded our attention with the onset of the First Gulf War. Now we knew why our Arabic friends had called to warn us not to return. They knew a war was in the making and they were concerned for our safety. Fortunately peace was quickly established and Saudi Arabia continued to prosper.

Rushing ahead of the Lord

Even so, God kept us busy with new responsibilities. Our minds were still on missions. And when the cruel Berlin Wall fell, I hastened to Germany. Hoping united Germany may well become the birthplace of the second evangelical movement to sweep over Europe. We jumped at the opportunity to rekindle the will of God who laid its foundation about four hundred years ago during the Protestant Reformation in Wittenberg, the little town right next to Leipzig.

By now Hitler and Communism had smothered the fire. The beautiful churches were empty and the hearts of most Christians grew cold. Yet we were sure we would find some brothers and sisters who loved the Lord more than their own life.

We were not disappointed; there were many who came forward and humbly told about their sacrificial existence during forty years of atheistic Russian occupation.

With great hopes I flew to Germany. The Leipzig – Halle airport was not yet built. I had to fly to Frankfurt and from there to Berlin. And then it was best to take a train for a two-hour ride to Leipzig. Finally, I landed in Berlin, but my two large and heavy suitcases did not. I was surprised. Usually when we travel our prayers for traveling mercy were sufficient, and all goes relatively smoothly. This time it was not so. I had to complain bitterly to the airport authority, but all they said was, we take care of it, go to Leipzig and so I did.

When I sat finally in the taxi on my way to the train station I got my mind on more important things and I told the friendly driver, the Berlin Wall fall because it was God's will. In disbelief I heard him ask, "Who is God"? After that I had heard this question many times. When I got to the train station I was glad I had no suitcases. There were no porters and people looked grim and unfriendly. I had to go up and down many stairs until I reached the platform to Leipzig.

Totally out of breath I sat down on one of the benches and almost immediately a very friendly older Lady sat right next to me. After a greeting smile we chatted amicably about so many things that I was sorry when the train arrived and I had to go to my first class compartment and she aimed for a lesser class. She waved to me invitingly to sit with her, but I decided not to, rationalizing I am too tired from my long flight and I needed to rest.

Later, I wondered, perhaps again I did not recognize an angel God did send to me. Perhaps this kind lady needed help in her Christian walk with Jesus or God had sent here to me to help me in my mission? What ever it was I knew I had not listened to the calling of God's Spirit, but it was too late.

When I arrived at Leipzig Hauptbahnhof trouble continued. My cousin Joachim was not there to greet me. His car, a Russian made Trabant, had broken down on the way to the station. All I could do was to go to a taxi stand and find my way to his villa, which he still had to share with many other people who were forcefully put there because of a lack of housing.

Inge, Joachim's wife, a truly gracious hostess and great cook, told me immediately I'd have to sleep in their living room on the couch because there is only one fairly good hotel in town and a long-term rent there is impossible.

I could not believe that my beautiful city that was once one of the largest business and cultural centers of Europe has been so totally wrecked. What I saw and heard was all very discouraging. All I could do is pray. And yes, my prayers were answered.

Bright and early the next morning the suitcases arrived. I had truly given up on them. Looking at my heavy, large suitcases, I knew I could never have carried them to the train without help. And God knew long before in this unaccommodating place there will be no help and so He arranged a miraculous delivery. And then in the afternoon my childhood friend Marga called, she had a wonderful practical mind and always knows how to solve problems.

She said your cousin told me about your situation.

I have good news, just last week a young man, living on the upper floor of my building had left for a long stay in West Germany. I have called his mother she is willing to rent you his small apartment for a month at a time. This was the second miracle.

I did not know that living space was so unavailable in my hometown. But I did hope if nothing worked out, my cousin Lya who recently moved into a newly built condominium would invite me to stay with her thinking she had promised to be very active in our mission, even she is an atheist, so she said.

"Not for long" I prayed.

Now when I called Lya, I was told she is in the hospital dying of cancer and will not receive visitors, not even me. The charismatic Lya was a key person in my plan, now I lost her, but that was not as bad as the horrible fact, my dear cousin Lya is spiritual lost for eternity.

This was the second big setback for me. Several months ago I was informed, my class maid Inge Kolbe, who was already in her school years a great organizer, had time and interest to be my assistant all the way, unfortunately she also had suddenly died on a reoccurring cancer. Right there I should have known God is sending me a message.

Also it was not easy to get around. I was way over 60 and to live in my little God given apartment I had to climb four flights of stairs many times a day. Even good old buildings in Germany had no elevators. But the place was in the center of town, an ideal location to conduct my mission. Unfortunately all my efforts yield little fruits. All went very slow. Even people where free from political bandage they still feared to talk to strangers. Only when at some time later Barie my husband came with me to Leipzig did we find a truly spirit filled church, under the guidance of a strong and steadfast pastor.



Rev Dieter Hampel Pastor (shown left) of the Elam Church had wisely guided his congregation through perilous times and now he shepherd one of the few truly thriving churches in Germany, alive in Christ and Spirit filled.

We tried to form with the invaluable efforts of

Reverent Donald Strubel, who worked tirelessly on our newsletter the “Leipzig Evangelical Ministerial Alliance”, a bridge between churches from Florida and Leipzig.

We hoped that with the help of such a brotherhood the Good News would again spread over all Europe just like it did in Martin Luther’s time. We also planned to erect a much-needed Christian broadcasting station. At that time such ideas were possible since laws against it were not yet established.

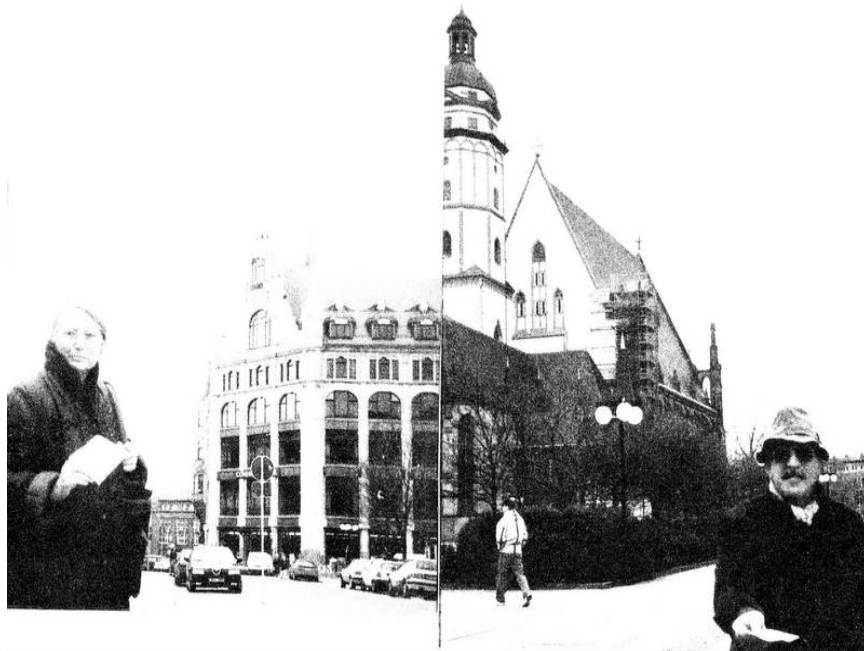


Left: Christina’s apartment building in Leipzig

I decided to use my apartment house, which I had inherited, to house that station and convert the rest of the house to a bed and breakfast hotel, catering mostly to visiting missionaries.

Unfortunately the communist had taken the property away from my Father and gave it back to me in

shocking condition. We quickly closed the lower floor with bricks and hoped that the city would give a tax brake to make it feasible to restore my house, and all the other thousands of houses, all over the city, who were in the same condition.



Christina & Barie distributing tracts at Leipzig's Deutsche Bank and Thomas Kirche

Sadly, none of that ever happened. We worked diligently with our Christian brothers and sisters in Florida and Christian leaders abroad but our efforts were not blessed. It became especially clear to us at our churches big fund-raising event, with music, speakers and good food. When the important day came close, my Husband our key speaker, was urgently called back to Saudi Arabia. And pastor Betzer our fundraiser had a death in his family and suddenly could not attend. I felt abandoned. I had the responsibility to feed three hundred guests a gourmet German –Dinner. The dinner was well received, but the funds collected at that evening did not even cover our costs.

This failure mead me stop and listen. I realized it was not for me to free my people from their bondage of communistic indoctrination, or more important, from their almost impenetrable spiritual ignorance.

The mission to Leipzig was not what God had in mind for us. Our call was to Saudi Arabia

Yet, in my excitement over the unification of Germany and my eagerness to help my people, knowing that they need desperately to call on the Holy Spirit, and return to their first Love of Jesus Christ, I did not notice the warning signs. God understood my longing and stood by me when I needed Him. He also noted my faithfulness to my earthly father's legacy.

My clinging to the past was the reason way I refused to sell my house to a realtor who made me a very good offer. It was not money I was after, it was my desire to honor my father and give my inheritance a meaningful purpose. I simply had ignored the fact that my true inheritance is coming from God my Heavenly Father. It was an expensive lesson to be learned. At the end I did what many other landlords in East Germany had to do, I surrendered my condemned building and gave it back to the city.

Yet, as always God turned failure into victory; with prayer I was able to save my cousin Joachim, my girlfriend Marga, her lively mother and one dear lady; because this time I listened to God's calling.

Mrs. Dorn and her husband were friends of my parents. I had not seen her since I was a little girl. As I walked by her once stately villa on one of my last days in Leipzig I had a strong desire to ring her bell. When I did I was shocked when a voice said, come on up.

In the doorway on the top floor stood a frail little old lady, smiling bewildered. When I told her I was Christina, her eyes widened, and full of joy she invited me into her room. It was a room the communist had assigned to her after they filled her home with many other people.

The ceiling was still leaking, she said, but while I was there, a dim sunbeam came through the large window, which had a view to the park. While we were chatting she made a fresh pot of coffee on a small burner after setting the table with lovely fine porcelain coffee cups she sat next to me.

And then I did what I had never done without some explanation; I prayed with her very slowly the sinner's prayer. She said this was the most beautiful prayer she ever prayed. We both felt very happy. When I was back in the states I learned that Frau Dorn had died a few days after I had left. I know in my Heart God had sent me to this gentle Lady so she can go home to her Heavenly Father where she belonged.

Saudi Calling

Shortly after the end of the Gulf- war we got a totally unexpected visit from Dr. Jack Busky, a former Methodist pastor. He knocked on our door and said “Barie if you ever plan to go on a mission I can pastor your church.”

We were rather perplexed by his offer and assured him that we had no intention to leave. We reminded him that two years ago we had ask him to help us to shape the newly forming Christian Fellowship, but he had declined. It appeared to us that now that the church was prospering, he had developed an unwarranted interest in it. We gave the matter to the Lord and did not think much more about it.

But to our surprise this was not all. That same week we had another visitor. This time it was Debby. She had just returned from her duty as a nurse in a Riyadh hospital. She loved Saudi Arabia and its people. Debby also loved the Lord, and one day she had talked too openly and convincingly about her faith to one of the female Arabic physicians. Her words were perceived as a threat to the country and she had to leave immediately.

But Debby was not alone. She told us that most Ex-Pats in Riyadh were very depressed and felt lost. Their joy, which came from getting together to pray and worship the Lord with their Christian brothers and sisters, was gone because the religious leaders in Saudi Arabia were disturbed by the influx of western culture that had entered their country during the war.

To free their people from that influence, Saudi leaders were targeting the Christian groups and their supporters by raiding their homes and deporting their leaders back to their country of origin, including Debby. This was very bad news for us. To lose that reliable workforce was also bad news for Saudi Arabia. The underground Christian groups were the pillars holding up the protective powerful tent of the Holy Spirit, and now these pillars of peace were being removed. There was no doubt in our minds that someone would have to erect these pillars again, and do it as soon as possible. Debby said, "Barie go back to Saudi Arabia, you are known in the "Ex-Pat" community and you can help bring the Christian spiritual families together again."

Barie listened, but then he told Debby that he had to care for his one church in Florida. He also had a job in his field as an architect that he could not just get up and leave, and even if he wanted to go to Saudi he could not, because he had no job offer. We prayed with Debby for our Christian friends in Saudi and gave the matter into the hand of God.

To our amazement, only twenty-four hours later we got a phone call. The man on the other end of the phone said he was the dean of the Saudi Arabia's College of Architecture of King Faisal University. He asked Barie if he would be interested in joining the faculty as Professor of Architecture? At first Barie said no, but then when the man said he was in Orlando, Florida and asked Barie to come and talk to him, Barie agreed.

During our drive to Orlando, my husband and I talked about what had happened in the past week – Pastor Busky's offer, Debby's plea and the job offer in Saudi. As we pondered everything, it became very clear that God was calling us back to the Middle East.

We realized God was giving us an assignment to help erect the spiritual pillars in that Kingdom anew, so that Christians would once again pray for prosperity and peace in that desert Kingdom. So, we decided to do God's will and return to Saudi Arabia. But Barie knew he would have to do something new upon his return. The large church groups that flourished before and were lead by pastors and elders were no longer tolerated. The question he faced was, how could Christians who come from all parts of the world to live and work in that hostile place, still worship and grow in the spirit?

The best answer was to simply study the Bible, pray and worship unobtrusively with a few friends and family quietly at home, under the guidance of excellent books, written by experienced teachers. To accomplish this goal, Barie looked to ICI, the International Corresponding Institute, a theological school of the Assemblies of God.

The Institute, which today is a university, furnished fully accredited Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Bible Theology. As they studied, students could not only learn the Word of God, but also further their education.

It was a great idea, but not without its problems. We knew that no religious books of any kind, except about Islam, were allowed to enter the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We hoped to get some encouraging advice from ICI, which had students all over the world. But the news we received was very discouraging. We heard that the ICI representative for the Middle East in Nicosia had attempted several times to send Christian study books to Saudi Arabia, but had failed miserably.

In desperation, Barie called ICI President Warren Flattery and explained our situation.

Warren encouraged us to try again, adding that if we could get one set of books into the country he would give us permission to reprint some of the books right there.

“But you cannot be our representative in Saudi Arabia unless you come to Irving Texas and take a one-week orientation course,” he said.

While that sounded like a great idea, we realized that we could not achieve it. At the time, it was simply too costly for us to drive from South West Florida to Irving Texas and stay there for a week. Besides there was little time, Barie had to pack for Saudi. However, we were happy that we still had time for a good-bye lunch with pastor Dan Betzer from the local Assembly of God church. During lunch we told him that we were sorry that our plan to bring ICI (International Correspondence Institute) to Saudi was not feasible because of its risks and because of our upcoming expenses to settle anew in Saudi, it made the trip to Texas impossible.

“Hurry, you can get to Texas just in time, I can help you” he said.

We were amazed by our Pastor’s Godly vision and his readiness to help. But we should have expected his encouraging response because, Pastor Betzer, a true man of God, always makes the impossible possible.

He told us to hit the road so we could make it to Irving in time for the ICI orientation and not to worry about money. He said the church’s mission’s committee was meeting that afternoon and that he would ask them to reimburse all of our expenses.

From that moment on we were so filled with joy and gratitude that our drive to Irving felt as if we were flying. By the end of the week we had been awarded our licenses to be the National Directors for ICI in the Kingdom Saudi Arabia.

Trusting that the Holy Spirit would continue to help us, we bought all the books necessary for a Bachelor's Degree in Bible Theology. The books filled several large boxes and just how we would get these boxes across the Saudi border was still a total mystery to us.

We praised the Lord all the way home. And then Barie, knowing that he was being called to be an ambassador for God in a Kingdom hostile to our Lord Jesus Christ, left for Saudi Arabia for the second time.

The Little Red Car

Saudi Arabia was now our home again. Not only did we return to the country, by the grace of God we also returned to the same kind of condominium ARAMCO had assigned to us when we ventured to the Middle East the first time. Our very pretty three-bedroom, two-bath condominium was in the corner of the eighth floor of an impressive 11-story high-rise building. We had a beautiful view of the Persian Gulf and on the balcony side we overlooked the growing city of Al Khobar. We knew that getting an apartment like that in that condominium had nothing to do with luck and everything with the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit. God knew we needed an accessible and easy to find place for our ICI students, and that location was just right. The building stood on the corner of a tree-studded boulevard, and the bus stop was directly in front of its main entrance. In addition, the apartment was equipped with a very-hard-to-get-at-that-time, but very-much-needed, telephone. Simply put, God brought us to Saudi Arabia for the second time “ready to go.”

This time with an extra call Barie was made contact pastor for the Assembly of God to our USA Air Force in Saudi Arabia.

While getting the condo went so fabulously and smoothly, one problem remained. We could not stop thinking about how we would get all the ICI textbooks, necessary for a BA degree in theology, into that unyielding country.

One day while I was waiting at home in Florida for my Visa, Barie called and told me to send all the textbooks to an address in Atlanta.

I later learned that Barie had talked about our problem at a business meeting with a friendly American Steven Reed from Ft Myers, who without much ado gave him this precious address. For the stranger, who became later a fellow brother in Christ, to trust us, and for us to send so many good books to someone we did not know, is best explained by the trust we placed in the Bible's words that, "with God all things are possible".



Chaplain Brooks with Barie at USMTM* in Dhahran

***United States Military Training Mission**

When I finally arrived in Saudi Arabia, the books had not yet arrived. After several anxious weeks, we got a call. The person on the phone sounded mysterious. He directed us to a street where he said we would find an empty lot and a little red car with an open trunk containing a box.

When we got to the secret place, we saw the car parked in a secluded corner. The trunk was open and in it was a box with the first shipment of our books.

After that initial call, we got many similar phone calls providing us with directions to the places we needed to go to retrieve the next packages. At times, we felt like spies or detectives in a Charlie Chan movie.

There was only one difference; we were never without real danger. This was especially true when we had to pick up a shipment in Riyadh.

We have to drive from Al Khobar to the Capital City of Saudi Arabia for four hours through the blazing hot desert. The new, well-built, six-lane highway, shot straight like an arrow through the wilderness. It would have been a great scenic drive, if not for the many totaled cars on the side of the road, left there as a warning. Each wreck reminded us how dangerous driving in Saudi Arabia actually was because there was no posted speed limit.

Also, in those days air-conditioned restaurants and filling stations where we could stop and rest on the way had not yet been built. But we were stopped by roadblocks manned by fierce-looking men with machine guns who checked our car and traveling papers.

It was not an easy trip, in any sense of the word. Yet whenever we stopped at a roadblock, we consistently sensed the presence of angels surrounding us.

This eased our fear and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, the often-grim looking soldiers just smiled at us and waved us through without checking the trunk with our precious cargo of Christian books.

At the beginning of our last trip to Riyadh we felt pretty safe in our comfortable Buick. We cruised *slowly* along the highway at about 100 miles per hour, while the other cars raced by us at speeds of 125 to 160 miles per hour. Then without any warning at all, an enormous brown cloud rolled over us eliminating almost all visibility. The sandstorm, called a Shamal, was the kind of storm whose sand blasts the paint off of automobiles and penetrates into car engines and brakes until the vehicles completely breakdown.

Most cars on the road were stranded instantly, but our car kept going and going. We knew that God knew we had a deadline to meet and our Lord was enabling us to get to our friend's home on time.

The car plowed through the storm and only then when we reached his villa did the engine stop humming abruptly.

Yet at that moment we were not concerned about us. We were looking for the car and driver we were supposed to meet at that hour to get the last two cartons. To our dismay there was no car in sight, but we also understood that in such a severe storm all cars were tucked into garages. So, we left the car and went to the home of Bob Kellum, our very kind host for the night. Bob smiled and led us in to his dining room. There on the table were the two boxes we had come to retrieve. Before the storm, a driver had put them on the steps of Bob's gate, rung the bell and disappeared. All was well.

Getting our car running again took only two days. Saudis are very well familiar with repairing storm-stranded cars. We had a very clean car, inside and out, but a lot of paint had been burnished away.

All went well until we visited Pastor Wally. He had what appeared to be an undetected large church, which was still intact after the Gulf War. He had planned to teach our ICI courses to his congregation and to help us reach the other groups in the Capital City.



Barie and pastor Wally just before the raid

Pastor Wally had asked Barie to preach at that day. After Barie's sermon, it was already late in the afternoon and we were ready to leave. But the friendly Philippino boy who was watching the gate told us to go back into the house until he told us that the coast was clear.

He said the Mullahs, which were the religious police, had been walking for hours up and down the street. Finally, at Moslem prayer time they disappeared and we could leave quickly. We made a hurried dash to our car, which was parked a block away from the Villa for security reasons. Then we raced to reach the highway, worrying all the way. We felt that something was not right.

We looked behind us to see if a car was following us. But there were no cars behind us and this time we didn't hit any roadblocks all the way home.

As soon as we entered the apartment we found out why we had felt so uneasy. The phone rang and a hushed voice told us that right after we left, Pastor Wally and his whole congregation 800 strong women and children were

arrested. The villa was raided and all possessions, books and musical instruments were carted off in trucks. This was very sad news not only for Pastor Wally and all the others, it was the first set back for ICI. Yet we thanked the Holy Spirit for leading us away in the nick of time.

One week later Pastor Wally's wife was released because she just had her baby. She called to tell us that all the church's leaders and their families had to leave the country immediately and Wally was sentenced to be hanged until death on Christmas day, which was not far off.

All the Christian groups began fasting and praying, phoning influential people and writing letters. Shortly before the holidays, the King decreed that Pastor Wally could go home. To all the Christians in Saudi Arabia this was a warning and a call to hold up the tent of peace discreetly and be respectful to others who were still struggling to find their way to God.

-17-

The Devil Hails



Barie, Pastor John, baptizing Murthy

Life in Saudi Arabia was never boring. Our mission was blessed because, with Christian hospitality, we created a feeling of home for our ICI students and gave spiritual support to many others. John from the Nazareth, India and a very God-loving and faithful student was our first ICI graduate. It seemed all was well. Yet, little did we know how the Devil would try, with all his might, to get rid of our mission and us. While we felt protected by the Holy Spirit we were not immune to the Devil's wrath.

His first attempt to stop us was on Barie's life. Every morning Barie drove a short distance, from our home to the university on a very busy highway. To keep up with traffic he drove about 100-120 miles per hour. On one occasion he was suddenly blinded when his car's hood popped open and flew directly against the windshield. It took all his might to stop the car and pull off the road. While looking into his rear-view mirror, Barie feared that all the speeding cars behind him would crash into his car and kill him. Instead, it was as if an invisible hand reached down and stopped the oncoming traffic.

All the vehicles stood like soldiers in a straight line across the road, waiting patiently for Barie to get his hood down. Then they all followed him slowly, not letting any other cars rush past until Barie reached the next exit. Barie was blessed to find a repair shop right by the highway.

When the mechanic looked at the hood he realized immediately it was no accident. The bolt holding the hood in place was missing. The bolt, which could only be loosened with great difficulty, had been deliberately removed.

We did not know who was so deceived that they would wish for Barie to die. We only knew, that the person who was listening to Satan and doing his bidding was a loser this time, just like his master. Especially in Saudi Arabia, the Holy Spirit and God's angels are always there when a Christian needs help. Yet the devil did not give up, and soon he tried again.

It was the evening before my trip to Europe. We had our regular bible study, followed by a closing prayer. As always, I planed to serve a little snack after our bible study. That evening I was preparing deep-fried shrimp.

Usually, before our closing prayer I would turn the burner on low to get the food ready on time. There was never any problem before.

Suddenly during our prayer someone yelled, “fire!” The kitchen had a serving counter separated by a sliding glass window to the dining room, so we could see the kitchen filling with smoke. The room was small and square and in instant black billowing clouds filled the space and overflowed into the hallway and dining room.

I saw that the smoke originated from my large deep fryer, and I inexplicably did what I very well knew not to do. I grabbed the pitcher of water on the kitchen counter and threw it on the burning oil.

The oil exploded with a loud hissing sound but the fireball did not burn my face. Instead it veered to my left and formed a ring of fire all around me.

The hot flames filled the whole kitchen, but they did not harm me. I noticed that I seemed to be standing under a clear bell-shaped dome surrounded by a cool, sweet and fragrant breeze. The scent was so intoxicating that it filled my whole being with an incredible joy. I was truly alive. When I heard Barie scream at me to, “get out of there,” I wondered why!

I heard distant shouting and the rattling of the entrance door. Everyone was frantically trying to flee from the fire. The entrance key, which was always in the lock, was missing. Breaking down a door with ease happens only in the movies, and this door was a thick, solid wooden fire door. In the excitement the key had fallen down, but no one could find it. Then suddenly the large flames shrank to nothing and it was over. We smothered the remaining fire with wet towels and threw the burning potholders into the washing machine.

Finally, only the blackened kitchen walls and stove were all that remained to remind us of what just happened.

Now all eyes were on me, and everyone was wondering why I was not hurt. The fact that I was standing there unharmed made us realize this was not a regular fire but an attack. With grateful hearts we praised the Lord for His protection.

Then we analyzed how the evil one tried to achieve his goal. The burner of the stove which was usually on low was this time on high. The filled water pitcher, usually standing on the coffee table during our bible study, was on the kitchen counter.

The large old-fashioned house key, which never leaves the lock, was finally found under the little bench, standing in the hallway. Was this coincidence or circumstance?

One thing we knew for sure, the Holy Spirit and God's angels were there and did what they do best, turned bad into good. The Holy Spirit had baptized me with fire. He demonstrated to our group His power in action, which made us stronger believers then ever before.

And one thing made me especially happy, without actually proselytizing; I could tell what had happened to our Moslem maintenance crew. I could tell them how our God miraculously protected us from real harm. It was a time of great joy and assurance that the Lord is always with us, but all that did not stop yet another attack. To close our mission was immensely important to the evil one. And so, one month later he was again in action. He learned he couldn't kill my husband. He knew he couldn't maim me. So he tried to destroy everything that made our mission work.

It happened early one morning, the day just before I returned from my mission trip to Germany. The two little children who lived in the apartment diagonal from ours were playing with matches. Before long, their whole kitchen was on fire.

Their mother slept at the other end of their apartment. When she finally awoke the fire had already engulfed their living room and blocked their access to the front door.

She and her children stood screaming on the balcony, until the firemen with their ladder led them to safety. The people from the other flats on the eighth floor had gone to work. But in the large corner apartment lived a Saudi family. The young mother and her baby could not leave the place, because her Saudi husband had locked her in.

Only then when her husband called from his office and allowed the firemen to pick her up from the balcony could she escape the flames, which had already reached her apartment. At the end, four of the five apartments on the eighth floor were either totally burned, or so damaged that their owners could not return for many months.

Miraculously our apartment was fine. Our Hindu houseboy, who had run upstairs after the firemen left, told everyone he had seen a great big angel standing protectively before our entrance door. We had no reason to doubt him because the place had hardly any damage, even though it was the closest apartment to the fire. Only a few tongues of smoke on the ceiling reminded us on what had happened. To our joy all was well. Adding to our joy, the vision of the protective angel standing on our door finally made a true believer out of our Hindu houseboy.

And seeing that our apartment was hardly touched perhaps gave food for thought to the rest of the Moslems living in our building.

The Evil One finally learned that no other God, but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had ordained our mission, and there was nothing he could do to change the plans the Lord had for us.

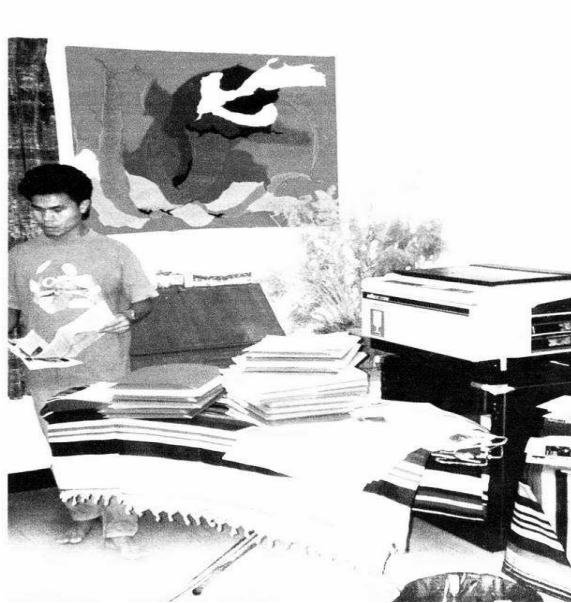
Going Home

Time went by, and for quite a while my health had been deteriorating. I had to request a wheelchair at the airport when returning from my last visit to Germany because I could not walk long distances. It was best for Barie and I to go home and see what was causing my deteriorating health.

We expected it would take a long time before we could return. So, we tried to find the right person to care for our mission while we were away. But it seemed hopeless to find him. We prayed to Jesus to heal me, but there was no answer and we thought God did not hear us. But we were wrong. He answered our prayer in a way we had least expected.

One fine morning a friendly Filipino stood on our door and said, "Pastor Barie, I just arrived in Saudi Arabia and I am here to help you with your mission." My husband could not believe what he heard. It turned out the young man was the very pastor Barie had met on his last business trip to the Philippines. He had told Barie then that he would come and help us. However, many others had said the same thing and had not fulfilled their promises. Hearing God calling, this young pastor obediently gave up his church and accepted this lesser position in Saudi. He could hardly wait to come to us with his good news.

Proof that whatever God ordains is perfect, this Pastor's experience in ministry and his genuine love for the Lord made him just the right person to help our ICI students to continue in their studies, and care for all the other brothers and sisters in Christ. Now it was time for us to go home.



Preparing study books

We never returned to that desert kingdom. Both of my hips had to be replaced. And Barie also had to have several operations. After our health improved, we would have liked to return to the Middle East but Barie's age prevented the governments from considering him for another position. But thanks to God's divine providence we knew our original mission continued and prospered. The leader who had been chosen by God to take our place lovingly cared for all of our students. Today, almost all of our brothers and sisters in Christ have returned to their own country.

While a few Christians remain in Saudi, computers provide for most of their spiritual needs. The invisible protective tent of the Holy Spirit, which was held up with prayers for so long, is slowly eroding. Increasing crime and unrest prevails in all of the Middle East today.

All what we can do is pray that the Good News, proclaimed by our Lord Jesus Christ, will finally reach the hearts and minds of those men and women in the Middle East who yearn for the true word of the God.

The “God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”



Empowering! ✨

“Holy Spirit and i” will encourage and provide a roadmap to the skeptic and discouraged while providing a revealing and warm personal account of love and victory over adversity.

Christina accompanied the Holy Spirit through 23 years in Germany under the Weimar Republic,

Hitler’s Nazi Germany, then the Communists behind the Iron curtain: and, then later spent 20 years in Saudi Arabia. The fact is, only examples of real life experiences can make it clear to most readers how to recognize the touch of the Holy Spirit in their personal lives. The Holy Spirit is the least understood person of the Trinity, therefore a book like *“Holy Sprit and i”* is greatly needed.

The book tells of the Holy Spirit saving her from the danger of war in Nazi-Germany; He protected her from the brutality of communism and later directed her to find freedom in America. Through the valley of deep sorrow when she had to leave her homeland with little hope to return, was confounded by the unexpected news of her mother’s death that turned great joy into sadness, and later loosing her home again because of the tragic accident of her husband Paul.

Christina Fez-Barrington is an ordained minister with a bachelor of arts in Bible theology from Global University. She and her husband founded the Saudi Arabia Division of the International Correspondence Institute and taught Bible Theology in Saudi Arabia. Barie was contact pastor for the Assemblies of God to the United States Air Force (USAF) and associate professor at Global University.

<http://writethevision.webs.com>

www.bariefez-barrington.com

ISBN-13 978-615-46609-5

Printer please insert Bar Code then delete these instructions

Printer attach 8 1/2"x5 1/2" Spine then delete these instructions

Holy Spirit and i  **Christina Fez-Barrington**