



Compelled To Go Compelled To Go

Issue #120B
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Part Two

It was with great anticipation & sadness that we faced our final Sunday of ministry, knowing we would leave just two days later. Our first session nine weeks previously had an attendance of around 35 or 40 people, so even though we had seen a steady increase, we were blown away when nearly 100 people crowded into the inadequate sized meeting room to hear our final teaching and bid us farewell.



After she told 15 children about God sending His Son Jesus, Jo Ann passed the baton and the Children's Bible to lovely Elham (upper right next to man in white shirt) who will continue the new ministry to children. Bob then taught on the Church and its importance in the lives of immigrants, and then we finished the day with lots of picture taking, tears, and deep felt farewells.

It is our plan to return next year as long as health is good and finances come in. The cost for this two-month trip this year was nearly \$15,000, and it would have been impossible if it had not been for the generous support of numerous people and a couple of churches. We praise God for you all, and you can rejoice in knowing you were part of what God did.

NOW WHAT?

Since returning, two trips to IA and IL were cancelled because of Jo Ann's surgery. However, we have made good progress and Bob has been able to get some serious yard work done in between two-to-three-times-a-week trips to the doctor's. We've been able to also attend services at our home church twice, and also attend the annual retired missionaries' retreat at Cross Pointe Retreat Center on Lake of the Ozarks, where we were privileged to share some of our stories about the Farsi work. Many were amazed at how God has worked.

Bob was also recruited to sing in a quartet at the retreat, not realizing that it was a male quartet when they told him he was to sing tenor. His voice is still tired more than a week later. Jo Ann offered to pinch him for the high notes, but he declined. The guys, all retired missionaries, tried to come up with a last-minute name, but nothing seemed appropriate. Looking at the picture, they might have considered "The Big Bay Brothers".



Our upcoming schedule is beginning to develop, though other additional opportunities are still unconfirmed:

- + Oct 25 – International Baptist Church Ministries mini-reunion, Kansas City (We will share our story of reaching internationals through the two IBC churches we pastored.
- + Oct 25 – ELEOS Coffee House Fall Festival, Kansas City. (This is one of the ministries we worked with during the year and a half we ministered in northeast KC among the internationals.
- + Oct 27 – Missouri Baptist Convention, Tan Tara, Lake of the Ozarks (27-29)
- + Nov 27 – Thanksgiving at Deanna's in Galesburg, IL
- + Dec 10 – Missions Banquet, Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Jefferson City, MO
- + Dec 25 – Christmas at Cindy's in Polk City, IA

FAMILY:

Our letter is already so long, but we want to give a brief sketch because there is some news you don't know about.

- + Cindy, Kevin, and Christopher are home from the mission field for a year, living in Polk City, IA. Christopher is now a college student taking his first year at Des Moines Area Community College.
- + Debbie and Mike continue living in Buena Vista, CO, where she has found enormous relief from her MS. We hope to see them at Christmas.
- + Cheri & Bob are still in St. Paul where Bob continues much travel with Ecolab, & they just became grandparents again as Sergey & Lindsay had a little boy, Gabriel. So, we're great grandparents again.
- + Deanna is faring well with her chemotherapy for breast cancer, now in the "lower dosage" stage; Jim resigned his pastorate and is now serving as a hospice chaplain, and enjoying the new role.

FARSI MINISTRY:

Not only is God blessing the Farsi ministry in Germany, but the entire ministry as a whole. Last week we got the following report from "M", and even though our letter is already far too long, we must include it for you. There are amazing things going on, and we continue rejoicing. We are so amazed at what God is doing.

- **Video Production Ministry**

"M2" and I have been continuing recording videos. Our vision is to produce high quality discipleship and teaching videos for new converts, and share the gospel with Farsi speaking Muslims.

Over the past 4 months, we have produced more than 15 studio quality videos on different topics ranging from 2 to 15 minutes. We rent CBN studio in Kiev, Ukraine, and work with professional sound managers and cameramen. Two of our American missionary friends assist us in preparing teaching materials.



Mohammad (on the left) during the video program

- **"Face to Face" Facebook Page**

All the videos we produce are available on our ministry Facebook page called "Face to Face". Last month, **more than 32 thousand** Farsi speaking people either directly visited, or saw a post related to our Facebook page. The interesting fact is that more than a third of them have visited from the countries (including Iran) where Christians are being heavily persecuted. Our goal is to increase the visitors to 100 thousand per month, and produce at least 15 videos every month.

Besides videos, we also translate, overdub and subtitle some the best teachers/preachers' teaching videos, and add them to our page. Our Facebook page can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Face-to-Face/195538370642405?ref=hl>. It's updated every other day with new contents. We've also created a friendly atmosphere where non-believers can ask questions and express their opposite viewpoints without being offended. As the result of that, we have had many fruitful Facebook conversations where Farsi speaking Muslims have got to know Christ better.

- **"Farsi Reads" Ministry**

Based on our experience, only a small percentage of new Farsi speaking converts engage in constant reading of God's Word and Christian literature. Part of the problem is due to cultural issues, and the fact that reading is not very popular in general. Lack of solid Farsi resources contributes to this problem as well.

"Brother F" and I established "Farsi Reads" ministry a few months ago. Farsi Reads ministry has 2 sides: On one side we create solid, Farsi Christian resources by translating valuable English materials into Farsi. The other side of the ministry is about motivating and encouraging Farsi speaking people worldwide to read God's Word and supplementary Farsi books/literature in order to grow in knowledge and faith in Christ.

To make this happen, we are working on a website (FarsiReads.com) that serves as our ministry base. We'd like to translate some of the best (of the best) Christian English books into Farsi. We are then planning to publish those books, and make them available on FarsiRead.com for free reading. What can't be available for free (due to author's permission) could be purchased in hard copy for a low price (enough to cover author's loyalty charges and shipping).

On FarsiReads.com, every user will have his own account where he can store books, add new books, share books with friends, rate books, write reviews for books, find reading partners, etc. We are also planning to encourage readers through holding reading contests, granting prizes for writing best reviews and so on.

We are also trying to put together a professional team of translators/editors so they could handle the translation projects. Our ultimate goal is to purchase a professional publishing machine, and manage translation, publication of several Christian books every month.

Currently the website is around 70% ready, although is not online yet. "F" is mainly responsible for web design and technical aspects whereas I work on putting together translation teams. This ministry is the first of its kind, and there's nothing like it in the world at this moment.

- **Mission Trips to Germany**

If we have enough funds, Ira and I would want to make a mission trip to Germany from mid December through early January to organize a New Year Evangelistic concert as well as a Christmas celebration with brother F. Last year, we had over 80 Farsi speakers (including many Muslims) who attended our concert. We hope to have more people this year.

The ministry in Germany has been growing very fast. Pastor Bob and Jo Ann have just returned to U.S. from Germany after a 2-months visit, where they taught and encouraged more than 60-80 individuals in Germany. As the result of that, we are hoping to receive a larger crowd this year.

We may also try to travel to some other cities where Iranians live, and share the gospel. But it will all depend on how much finances we would have.

- **Ira's Ministry**

Ira has been leading the Sunday school class of the Ukrainian church we attend on Sunday mornings. She began the class with our son alone around 4 months ago. The Lord has been blessing her ministry abundantly, and now if everyone shows up, she would have around 9 kids. She uses different materials such as Flannelgraph, biblical felt stories, children crafts, etc, to communicate the truth to kids.

There are 2 non-believer families that attend the church regularly because their kids ask them to be at Ira's class.



Ira's Sunday school class

- **Prayer requests for my brother ("Hamid"), Ira's brother ("Andrey"), Ira's grandma ("Nadia") and the situation in Ukraine**

Around 2 days ago, my sister gave me the news that my 40-years-old brother's brain tumor has recurred. With a grade 3 Glioma tumor, his prognosis is not good at all. The tumor has grown back to about half a centimeter (0.19 inches) despite all chemo, radiotherapy and thousands upon thousands of dollars of expenses, and is growing fast. He's facing 2 options: either becomes paralyzed, then falls into coma followed by death, or loses his speech, possibly sight, then coma and death. In either case, it will be a painful and slow death. It will happen sometime within the next 14 through 40 weeks. The oncologist has recommended one very last medication, an expensive kind of a shot (it costs \$4000 per shot). He would need 2 shots per month for the next 6 months. This would allow him to possibly live 5-6 months longer. At any rate, his death is 100% certain by next June.

What makes my heart even heavier is the fact that my relatives are hiding this from him and letting him keep making plans for the future. He has 2 little boys as well. I'm still looking for ways to deliver the message of the gospel. I'm like a "prophet without honor" in my family, and in spite of having the gift of Evangelism, I'm not sure how to effectively share the gospel with him. Because of his recent headaches, his communications are limited to few minutes of Skype and email readings. I'm going to ask few of my friends to write him a note and share God's love him.

As if it's all not enough, Ira's 92-years-old grandma has had a stroke, and is bedridden. She can't talk or move, and Ira's family has been taking care of her. Ira's mother had to quit her job to be able to care for her.

At the same time, Ira's brother has had a depression attack. He's been dealing with severe depression for the past 5 years. He had got married 3 months ago. The depression attack is so bad this time that his wife has decided to leave him and get a divorce. He has to be confined in mental hospital for 2-3 weeks.

And last but not least, there's a faint light at the end of the tunnel regarding the situation in Ukraine. It seems like Russian army is retreating back to their bases, even though pro Russian terrorists are still occupying a good part of Donetsk and Lugansk territories at eastern Ukraine. At the same time, the economy of Ukraine is falling apart, and shortage of gas, coal and other things have caused prices to skyrocket. With salaries being the same (or decreased in case of teachers, doctors, etc), people are getting poorer every day. But at the same time, I believe more people are coming to the Lord, taking the Christ's light yoke.

- **At the end...**

I'm not sure how to formulate my prayer requests. I guess I'm overwhelmed at the moment. So please pray for us however the Holy Spirit leads you for whatever updates you have read in this newsletter. Thanks again for your love, partnership and prayers. I'm looking forward to the day that we'll all meet at the presence of our Lord, when the tears are wiped out from our eyes, without the threat of war, disease, death, etc.

In His love,

"M" & Ira

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FINALLY:

In closing, please pray, and pray diligently:

- + For us that we have wisdom, insight, energy, endurance, and continued health.
- + For each of the people we've mentioned by name, & for the group as a whole – for salvation & maturing.
- + For Jim, Deanna, and the kids, as she goes through cancer treatment and additional important decisions.
- + For "F" in Germany, "M" in Kiev, & "H" in Sweden, providing ongoing leadership to the Farsi ministry.
- + For "P" that he will remain strong in Christ, and that he will be allowed to remain in Sweden.
- + For Ulrich Weyel and his volunteers leading the Café Hope ministry.
- + For the two of us that God will use us often, in many places, and effectively for His Kingdom's growth.

In His Bond, By His Grace, and For His Kingdom,
Bob and Jo Ann Tolliver