

LinkUp 
14 years and up



**YOUNG
GIRL
FROM
KOSOVO**

When will the tears stop falling? I see so many tears as I look down over my village. Tears on the faces of those who live there. Everyone is sad. I am sad too. When will the tears stop? So many years and so many tears. Rivers of tears have fallen.

**We were running. I
was screaming. I
was so afraid.**

They shot my daddy. They slapped my mommy. They hit her so many times. I was crying and I was scared. Then the fire started and many men with guns were firing. We were running. I was screaming. I was so afraid. My mommy was pulling me and I couldn't run fast

enough. She was holding on to my hand so tight. Then she fell down. Blood was everywhere on my mommy. I screamed out for my mommy, but she didn't answer me. Then I felt

pain in my back. It hurt so bad and then everything got dark. I fell on top of Mommy, and then I didn't have any more pain.

I started to go up! I heard the sounds below me. So loud! So much smoke, so many rifles, so many people crying, so much destruction.

I am one of many little children who are now in Heaven with Jesus. He wiped away my tears. I have special blessings. My mommy and daddy are Here with me. We are together and have no more tears. I'm not scared anymore. I like it Here. I wish all people could come Here. It is beautiful! Here we don't have any rifles or fires or screaming or fear.

I asked my special Friend why people don't want to come Here. I asked Him why are there so many tears in Kosovo. Why are there so many people fighting each other and so many people dying? Why is there so much fire and so many houses all broken down? Why are so many people so sad and do not like each other? I am sad sometimes, because every day there is still fighting. Every day

(Editor's note: For testimonies of how our Family are ministering to refugees in Kosovo and the Balkans, see FAR 98 and 100, and *Grapevine* articles in issues 59-60, 64, 67, 69-71.)



there is still destruction. I would like to help the other little children who still live in my country to not be sad. But it is a big job and I need help. So Jesus said that I can get help. He said I can tell you my story and you can pray for the people of my country. There are many towns and villages in my country where the people have lost hope. There is no light in some villages. The light has been put out. There are only broken stones from houses, and graves with dead bodies and coldness in the hearts of those who are alive.

One time when I was visiting my people on a trip from Heaven,

The lady who shines is a messenger of His love.

I saw a young woman. She was so beautiful and kind. She was gentle and sweet. She was crying for my people. She was praying to Jesus for help to bring my people His love. She was with others who pray for my people too. They bring beautiful posters of Heaven

and the message of a better life to my people. I was so happy to see them!

They are so bright! So bright! Such light shines from them! They cannot see it, but I can. I can see the light shining, and I see the hearts of the lonely and sad become warm from the shining light. The light goes inside the people who are sad and lonely, and they get warm! Some people like this light, and they pray with these people, and then they have the light too! So beautiful! The light is so bright because there is so much darkness.

Jesus told me the lady who shines is a messenger of His love. He said she can't see the light shining. I asked Him if could I tell her the light is shining. He said yes.

Messenger of love, kind lady,

(continued on page 5)

I would like to help the other little children who still live in my country to not be sad.

A young Kosovar boy comforts his brother crying for his father after walking out of Pec along a snowy road that goes to neighboring Montenegro.





A Kosovar woman leads her crying children out of Pec in March 1999.



A young refugee from Smolic in Kosovo stares out from a truck transporting him, his mother and some 50 others to the Albanian city Bajram Curri.

Soon the darkness will be everywhere—not just in Kosovo.



An ethnic Albanian woman in Kosovo joins protests of violence that threaten to ignite wider ethnic conflict.

WAR
child



Vebi Regioi, from Kacanik in southern Kosovo, cries after being expelled from his home by Serb army and police forces after arriving in Albania at the Morini border crossing. He and his family were expelled from their homes and bused across Kosovo to Albania by Serb police.

Ethnic Albanian refugees reach out to receive bread from a truck in a temporary camp set up in an old factory on the outskirts of Kukes, Albania.



(continued from page 3)

you shine very brightly! I see your tears fall for my people. Thank you for bringing posters about Heaven and the message about Jesus to my people. So much darkness is in my country, but you shine very bright! Please do not leave my people! I know it hurts your heart to see so much darkness. But I am praying for your request that Jesus will send help to reach the lost and to bring His message to them.

Soon the darkness will be everywhere—not just in Kosovo. Soon great darkness is coming over all the Earth. The people who know Jesus will shine very bright! Soon the darkness will try to put out the light. Jesus said the King of Darkness is coming and he is planning to kill all the messengers of love. The messengers of love belong to Jesus. He is the King of Light and they help Him.

Jesus said the King of Darkness will not kill all the messengers of love because they have His light, His love, and they will destroy the darkness. The closer His messengers of love are to Him, the brighter they shine and the more they get rid of the darkness. The darkness flees when it sees the light. It goes away! The darkness looks like it will put out the light, but it doesn't.

Jesus said His light will cover the Earth one day, and then there will be no more tears, or fires, or destruction or death. I thank you, messengers of love, for being His light to this world. We need you. Please shine for Him. ◆

Kosovo

A region of southwest Serbia. Settled by Slavs in the seventh century, it was under Turkish rule from 1389 until 1913, when it was divided between Serbia and Montenegro. After World War II, Kosovo became an autonomous region within Yugoslavia, which lasted until Serbia imposed direct rule in 1990. (Source: Microsoft Bookshelf 99.) (Editor's note: Look up the words "Kosovo" and "Bosnia" on the HomeARC for further information on the conflict since 1990.)

Background photo: A tear trickles down the cheek of Blenta Dervijhalli, 11, as her sister Qendreza, 10, wipes her eyes with her winter hat after they arrived into a refugee camp set up on the outskirts of Kukes, in northern Albania.

This story comes to you from one of the many mothers who fell in one of the cruel and senseless wars of the world. It is told by a mother separated from her children by death.

This dear mother wept and pleaded with Me for her daughter, for the children she'd left behind. She asked Me to help them, and I allowed her to go and talk with her daughter, to give her hope, and to plant a seed of faith in her heart. Now she has asked Me to let her tell you her story, so that it may give hope and plant seeds of faith in the hearts of other children like

her own, who were robbed of loved ones, of parents, because of the cruel wars of the world.

There are no names in this story, because there are so many like this mother, this father, this daughter and her brothers. Many need this story to give them hope of peace and faith for freedom. Many will not find it in this world, but soon they'll enter Heaven, their real homeland, and there they will find the peace and freedom they're seeking. Oh, what a day of rejoicing that will be, when these come home into My arms of love, that I may comfort them.

WAR MEMORIES OF A NAMELESS YOUNG WOMAN

WITH AN
INTRODUCTION
BY JESUS

“Run! Run!
Hide some-
where!”
different
ones
screamed
at her.

As the gentle breeze blowing across the rolling hills caressed the young woman's face, the anxious, tense feeling that had gripped her slowly started to fade. Her clenched fists relaxed somewhat as she took a deep breath of the clean, cool air. Viewing the panorama before her, a wave of sadness swept over her. The news she'd just heard of her war-torn homeland brought back so many sad memories. She was safe now, but what about her friends, her family, her father?

Her thoughts drifted back in time to when she was just a young girl. Life was so different

then, so uncomplicated. The woman sank down to the ground, resting her back against a tree to shade herself under its leafy branches. She could visualize herself back in the small stone house her parents built on the slope of a hill in the countryside. It was just a simple structure, made of stone and cement, but to her parents it was like a palace. It was theirs, and the land around the house was theirs as well.

Father had made a small play area next to the back wall for her brothers and her. It was shaded by a beautiful, tall tree that must have been hundreds of years old.

Recalling the happy hours her brothers and she had spent playing there brought a smile to the woman's face. Her life had been harmonious. It had been filled with the simple joys of life. Why had it all changed?

Anger welled up in her as she thought of her dear father's face when he came back that fateful day from selling their produce at the market. He looked so grave, so serious. She had never seen him like that before. The look in his eyes scared her. She could still hear her mother's trembling voice as she hurriedly huddled her brothers and her out of the house to go and play.

From behind the house she overheard fragments of the conversation her parents carried on inside. Her father's voice angrily talked of things she didn't understand then. He talked of riots and explosions. Her mother hushed him, so she didn't hear the rest of what he said.

Not long afterwards her father said goodbye to them all and left the house. It was the last time she would see him.

Tears welled up in her eyes now as she thought of him. Oh, what had become of him? Was he even still alive?

Her mother had called her and her brothers back into the house. Her eyes were red and her face tear-stained. Her mother's voice broke as she spoke of war, of fighting and destruction, of the hatred that was destroying her people, that was taking away their land. They would have to leave their happy home. They would have to flee across the river to another land. Their father had gone to fight, to defend their land.

Her mother cried softly as she hurriedly packed a few of their belongings. They would not be able to carry much. They had a long trek ahead of them over the mountains. Her younger brother, just six years old, looked at her with wide, fear-filled eyes. He

A woman from Decane, in western Kosovo, holds her face after crossing into Albania at the Morini border in April, as members of her family ride on the back of a tractor. The family spent four days on their tractor, traveling the 71 kms from Decane to the border.



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said, "I'm scared! I don't understand! Why do we have to go?!" She recalled taking him into her arms and holding him close. She had been only two years older than he. She'd heard of war and fighting before, but she didn't really understand herself what was happening until much later.

As they walked away from their home and climbed the hill to the road that led to the river, she looked back sadly. *Will I ever see my home again?* she wondered.

They had walked for some time when they were overtaken by more and more people traveling in the same direction. Some were on foot; others rode on carts drawn by oxen or donkeys. Some passed by in cars with the roofs piled high with bundles and furniture. The faces of all looked grim. Some cried. Others angrily clenched their fists and cursed at the sound of explosions in the distance.

Suddenly a wave of panic swept through the throng of people moving down the road. Everyone started running in different directions. "Run! Run! Hide somewhere!" different ones screamed at her. She could hear the sound of approaching planes. As she looked up she could see several coming closer and closer. Her mother pulled on her. "Come, come, quickly!" she cried.

Her older brother was running ahead of them. Her heart pounded as she raced to find cover. Suddenly there were screams and shouts, and explosions on every side. She looked in

horror as people fell beside her. There was blood all over the ground. She stood still, frozen in fright. Her mother let go of her arm and kept running with her younger brother in her arms, until she, too, fell to the ground.

As the roaring of the planes disappeared in the distance, everything grew eerily quiet. All that could be heard was the moaning of the wounded. A few survivors tried to attend to them. Others walked on, silently.

The girl stood there, dazed. Somehow she knew that her mother and younger brother would not get up from where they had fallen. She looked around for her older brother, but he was nowhere in sight. *Had he been able to run to safety?* she wondered.

Someone took her by the hand and the small group of survivors walked on and on and on. By nightfall they lay down for a short time in a sheltered area. Exhausted, she fell asleep. It seemed it had only been minutes until she was awakened, and on they walked and walked and walked.

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Returning to reality, the young woman wiped the tears that were now streaming down her face. She always cried at the memories of those awful events.

She looked over her shoulder at the rough buildings that had been her home for the past ten years now. She and the small group of survivors had been granted refugee status after crossing the river into the neigh-

An ethnic Albanian family from Kosovo, drives their tractor to Kukes.



Some were on foot; others rode on carts drawn by oxen or donkeys.

Some passed by in cars with the roofs piled high with bundles and furniture.

boring country. They'd been safe here, and though their existence was simple, she was thankful she could live in peace. Her older brother had also made it to safety, but had later left in search of their father. She'd not heard word from him since.

She sighed deeply in an attempt to shake the terrible memories that had just passed before her mind's eye. She understood now what had happened and the reasons why, but it all seemed so senseless.

Her eyes followed a bird flying across the bright blue summer sky. *Oh, to be free as a bird, to be able to fly away from it all*, she thought. Though thankful for a place of refuge, the confined area in which they lived was a constant painful reminder that this land was not her home. Would she ever be free again?

She was startled by a soft voice that called her name. *Mother?! Mother?!* No, it couldn't be. She shook her head as if to wake herself from the deep

thought she'd been in. Was she imagining things now?

Suddenly she felt a warm presence, and the sky in front of her seemed to light up with a soft glowing light. Again she heard the soft voice of her mother calling her.

"My daughter, my daughter," her mother whispered. "Listen to me!"

Somehow, it didn't seem strange that her mother was speaking to her, though she had died on that terrible day. A warm feeling of assurance and security seemed to envelop her.

"My daughter, I have a message for you," her mother's voice continued.

"What is it, Mother?" she whispered.

"I want to tell you what happened to your little brother and me that day we fell to the ground. At first I hurt so badly, and I was worried about your little brother who was still in my arms. But then all went quiet and I felt so, so light.

She was startled by a soft voice that called her name.

“We were shown into a room so beautiful, it took my breath away.”

“It was dark, very dark at first, but then a light seemed to surround little brother and me. We were holding each other, but we were not afraid anymore, just very surprised. A voice called us to follow, and it seemed as if we walked without effort towards this beautiful warm golden glow in the distance.

“I had been so tired from the long walk, but it seemed as though a whole new sense of energy had overtaken me. It felt strange, but so good. Then out from the light came your grandfather. He looked so young, so strong! The way he’d looked when I was still a child.

“He said, ‘My daughter, my grandson, come! Come with me to your new home.’ When I looked surprised, he sat down with us and told us that God had prepared a special place for us because of our suffering, and the suffering of our people. Even

though we did not know Him, God had asked His Son to take care of us, to give us a place of freedom.

“You know, my daughter, that in our religion we do not believe that God had a Son, but when your grandfather told me of Him, it sounded so natural, so matter-of-fact, that of course I believed him.

“Your grandfather asked me if I would like to meet God’s Son. I said, ‘Yes, I would like to!’ and little brother also chimed in, ‘Yes, Mommy, yes, can we go and see Him with grandfather?’

“Grandfather looked so pleased and smiled so happily at our responses. ‘Good!’ he said. ‘Let’s go!’

“He took little brother in his arms and carried him as we

Vlora Kuka, 10, from Popoic in Kosovo, weeps after a car arrived to take her and her family off a mountain that they had crossed to enter into Albania.



walked along a beautiful tree-lined path. Colorful flowers I'd never seen before grew everywhere. It was a beautiful walk.

"It didn't seem long before we entered a building of white, sparkling stone. It was whiter than any white I'd ever seen. As soon as we entered we were shown into a room so beautiful, it took my breath away. Little brother squeezed my hand and let out a big, 'Aaaahhh!'"

"But there wasn't much time to look around, for toward us came a Man so kind, with eyes so soft and tender, a face so true and good, I'd never seen the like. He embraced us and took little brother in His arms. With His arm around my shoulder, we walked into a beautiful garden.

"There He told us the story of His Father's infinite love for our people. He told us how His Father's heart had hurt with our suffering; how He wanted to save us from it, and had sent His Son to suffer in our stead; how He'd gone to Earth and experienced all the pain, all the agony we'd ever feel, and then had died in our place so we could be free forever.

"Oh, my daughter, you wonder if you will ever be free. Yes, yes, you will be! You will when you join us over Here. It won't be so long. Please believe me! Yes, yes, you'll have a home again!"

"After He told me His story of love, He led us to our new home. It's so much better, so much more beautiful than our old home. I was speechless at the sight. It's not even comparable, and words

cannot describe how beautiful it really is.

"My daughter, you will see! You will see! You must carry these words I've told you in your heart. You must carry the freedom that's awaiting you Here in your heart until you reach our new home. It may be a long journey until you reach it, with difficulties and hardships, loss and pain, but what's awaiting you Here is worth it!"

With these words, the light that shone softly and brightly in front of the young woman disappeared. The afternoon sun had already started to set. How long had she been sitting here?

She got up slowly, as if in a dream. The feelings of uncertainty, anger and frustration she'd felt earlier had all disappeared. An assurance and feeling of strength rushed through her. Somehow, she knew that what had happened just then had not been her imagination. It had been real! Her mother's message was etched in her mind.

There was a new spring in the young woman's step as she walked back to her living quarters in the camp.

"I'll be free someday!" The words rang like bells through her head. "I'll be free someday!" ◆

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WILLIAM WALLACE

The movie *Braveheart* portrayed the relentless battle and fight that my people were up against.

This beautifully portrays the spiritual battles that you in the Family are up against. The

My life certainly shows that one person with a belief is more powerful than thousands with only an interest.

relentless attacks of Satan do not stop so easily. So if you are up against the wall and you are getting hit right and left, you are going to have to fight back and not take things lying down!

I know that in your Letters of David of the End there is much about fighting; I'm reading those Letters! You in the Family must realize that our battle was intense and fierce, and we had to give all, yet your battle is even more intense. There is a difference between fighting physically and fighting on the spiritual plane against the spirit of Satan with spiritual weapons, because it

deals with the will and the choice of the heart.

In some ways it's easier when you are young to go out and fight a physical battle, as shown by history. Young men have been so easily induced to go fight a physical war for a physical cause, and so many have died. Many have given their lives to countless wars—some for good reasons, some for bad—but most just a waste of time and life. But we're talking right now about your fight in the spirit, the same battle that Jesus Christ fought during the forty days and nights in the wilderness. That is what is happening now.

The beauties of real love are much better and more powerful than just having a pretty face and gorgeous body. I ought to know!

You who have been brought up in the Family have a big head start. God chose you and put you there. You really ought to tell Him and others that you are thankful for that place. Of course, you

can't see it as clearly as we can from this vantage point, especially when you are getting hit with all the inner conflict of battles, testing of your heart and will.

You really have to get over the hang-ups that some of you have about using the spiritual weapons of your warfare.

My resolve and will was tested constantly, but I came to the decision that it was better to fight and die for a witness to my people, instead of letting our enemies walk all over us.

I was forced into a decision, and even though bitterness against the government for what they did to my family and to my people was part of my purpose, still mine was also a battle of the will.

It was not easy to fight in my case. We were up against a more powerful enemy. But my life certainly shows that one person with a belief is more powerful than thousands with only an interest.

We were up against the wall and couldn't turn around and walk away. We had to fight; we were forced to fight, for our freedom. Not only the freedom to choose how to worship and live for God, but also to have the freedom to choose how to live and whether we would allow the enemy to take

our lands, cattle, homes and even our wives and children.

Was not my life as portrayed in this movie interesting to you? Did not my life and the testimony of my life enflame your heart to want to fight for a cause, your cause, the greatest this world has ever known?—The cause of your King Jesus Christ, the cause of your King David of the End?

I cannot come and fight; I can only come and help *you* fight, and I will! I challenge you to call on Jesus and ask Him to help you fight. There is a great army right

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Sir William Wallace Scottish Freedom Fighter

Born between 1260 and 1278. Tortured to death—23 August 1305. Tradition has long believed that William Wallace was born in Elderslie, Renfrewshire, although contemporary research would indicate that he may well have been born at Ellerslie, in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire. He was a popular figure who led guerrilla fighters against the forces of English occupation, and had his greatest victory on 11 September 1297 at Stirling Bridge. Much has been said and written about William Wallace, and the release in 1995 of the film *Braveheart* evoked further interest in him.

It is a historical fact that Wallace lived in Scotland while it was subjected to brutal occupation by the forces of English King Edward I. Wallace would not succumb to this English rule, and he fought for his country's freedom. Wallace was the catalyst that sparked a revolution. He was betrayed by Menteith to the English, taken to London and accused of treason. At his trial he refuted the allegation, stating that he had never sworn loyalty to Edward, so how could he be guilty of treason? He was dragged through the streets of London, tortured and hanged.

Nine years after his barbaric murder, at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, the Scots, led by King Robert the Bruce, defeated the English army of Edward II, and so secured the independence for which Wallace had become a martyr.

Here just waiting to do battle! We love to do battle for our King! We will win this war!

Perhaps you need some other incentives to get you going. One incentive is that when you give yourself to your King and to your belief, and in this case, the Word, the Family, and to Jesus—when you give yourselves over to this, you deepen

There is a great army right Here just waiting to do battle!

your life. You become real. You live life to the full; you become real leaders—broken, but real!

As David puts it, "If you'll get on fire, the world will come out to see you burn!" And so will others become attracted to you. You are nothing, but with the power of God you are everything. So be consumed with your belief in the Word. Absorb it, love it, drink it in—this is your key to win.

Be the bravehearts that are needed to



fight this relentless battle against Satan and his punks who are attacking you in full force. Just as the King of England and his

This is what Jesus Christ did for you—He went all the way!

soldiers were attacking me and my people in full force—making raids, burning our villages, taking our women, stealing our children—so you are being attacked spiritually by the forces of Satan right now. It's time to wake up and see that these are attacks of the Devil, and not just some random bad circumstances you are having by chance.

Satan is attacking you to overtake you! Are you going to let him do it? Are you going to sit there? Take your sword and fight! It's worth it, I'll tell you! It's worth it to fight—even if you lose! But you won't lose if you keep attacking!

Mel Gibson's got a lot better face than I had! I'm not a Mel Gibson, but he sure did a good

job of portraying my life, for what he knew about me.

The movie did portray that your enemy is out to win and will stop at nothing—using other people, things of this world, even handsome men and pretty women, or anything to get you off the wall of the fight. Just anything to get you off the battlefield, to get you to stop attacking and influencing others with your life.

So my words to you are: To the front! To the front! To the front! Take up your sword with me and let us go to the front and attack and make inroads into the

When any one of Jesus' children is martyred, many more fighters are born.

strongholds of your enemy. Go to the front and attack his strongholds on others' lives. Put the enemies of your Family, the enemies of Jesus Christ, the enemies of your king and queen and the enemies of your soul on the run!

(Use those weapons you have! I used the weapons I had. That was one of our weak points—we didn't have the weapons to fight the enemy. And that is what I eventually had to do—train an army and make weapons.

Eventually others came to my aid, yes, but there had to be someone inspired with a belief to go all the way with it, and to stop at nothing to complete it.

My resolve and will was tested constantly, but I came to the decision that it was better to fight and die for a witness to my people, instead of letting our enemies walk all over us.



This is what Jesus Christ did for you—He went all the way! He fought the battle relentlessly. Read

All these weapons of the New Day kill pride. They kill your worrying about what others think about you. So let them laugh at you while you go on to victory and they don't.

it in the Gospels. Read it again and see the relentless battle Jesus fought for you. For you have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin, but you will. This is what you are being trained for,



because your enemies are going to try to stop you.

So come with us to the front, and fight! Don't give up too soon, and when you win a battle, go immediately to the next and attack that one, just as our small band kept attacking fort after fort, until the war was won.

I was like Paul, who went to Jerusalem against the counsel of his brethren and was captured and killed. Even though it seemed like such a defeat for the cause, God still used my foolish lack of wisdom to launch another attack. The blood of the martyrs is the

Your enemies are going to try to stop you.

seed of the Church, and my death touched many lives. From the spirit world I was able to influence those who kept up the fight.

When any one of Jesus' children is martyred, many more fighters are born in the hearts of the hungry and believers. So if you are called on to be a martyr, it will not be a loss, but a gain. I gave myself to my God and to my cause and to my people to win the war for freedom.

**Will
you?**

W

hat I meant to say about not having the weapons to fight our war with and that we just used anything we could find, was that you really have to get over the hang-ups that some of you have about using the spiritual weapons of your warfare. Some of my people complained that the things we had to fight with were ridiculous and made us look foolish. You really ought to just try using these new spiritual weapons you have been given. Take a friend and tell them, “Why don’t we just do this together and see what happens?”

Look at what Moses had to do! His people were giving their lives fighting furiously against their enemy, and God told Moses to stay on the hilltop and just keep his arms raised in praise to God. When he did it, the battle was won! He had to do it all day and got so tired and had to have others hold his arms up for him. So if you are tired, get some friend to help hold up your arms. Try praising; it’s very powerful and will bring down power.

All these weapons of the New Day kill pride. They kill your worrying about what others think about you. So let them laugh at you while you go on



Postscript


WILLIAM WALLACE

to victory and they don’t. Just look at these weapons as weapons of war and be wholehearted and do it! You will really like it.

What I was starting to say about Mel looking a lot better than me, I was hinting at ... don’t worry if you are not all that you want to be in the physical. That just gets in the way. The beauties of real love are much better and more powerful than just having a pretty face and gorgeous body. I ought to know! ◆

Just as the King of England and his soldiers were attacking me and my people in full force—making raids, burning our villages, taking our women, stealing our children—so you are being attacked spiritually by the forces of Satan right now.





Prisoner of War

A Tale of Modern Torture

All those things my mama had pounded into my head as a child proved to be stronger than the torture they tried to inflict on me.

My name is Johnny—John William Franklin, U.S. Army, Korean War POW*. I was young when I went off to Korea. I had been brought up to believe that I had to fight for my country and my freedom, so off I went to fight. I did what was expected of me, and I fought well, until that dreadful day I was captured and taken as a prisoner of war.

When I was taken as a POW, my faith in Jesus was reborn, and it grew. My upbringing, and all those things my mama had pounded into my head as a child proved to be stronger than the torture my captors tried to inflict on me, or the conditioning they subjected me to. Jesus came through, and He made my heavy

burdens light.

I'd never considered myself very religious before I was captured. Mama tried hard to instill faith and good Christian values in us kids as we were growing up. I paid attention some, but as I grew into my teen years I was ... well ... you know ... I thought I was a smart guy, on top of the world. I wanted to live and enjoy life, and spiritual things took second place—or not even second place. Religion was way down the line somewhere—certainly not on the list of important matters that I gave much time or attention to. God bless Mama. Little did I ever expect that the seed of faith she had planted in my heart would grow and flourish, and one day become my saving grace.

***POW:** "Prisoner of War," a soldier captured and held by the enemy during wartime.

One time during my time in captivity, in the dark and still of the night, I was hungry and tired and cold. I was weak and weary, and about to collapse under the strain of it all, when I suddenly could hear her—my mama’s voice praying to Jesus for me—just as clear as day. Mama was praying, and Jesus made it bearable. He even made it almost easy.

I underwent a modern-day form of torture—psychological torture*. This is perhaps the most subtle form of torture, and in many ways the most dangerous. Although it’s supposedly outlawed in many places, many folks are still getting away with it. They even make it look acceptable in some places now—at least they try to explain it away. They have all kinds of fancy words for it, and you don’t have to be a prisoner of war to be subjected to it. If you don’t have faith in Jesus, it can be horrifying.

One of the most important things I can tell you is that if you’re a Christian who has faith in God and the protection of His Holy Spirit, He is able to keep you through anything, even the horrors of psychological warfare or torture. Jesus has promised to keep you in perfect peace if your mind is stayed on Him. This is the solution. This is the antidote that

will keep you through such onslaughts or attacks of the Enemy.

For a Christian who undergoes psychological torture, being filled up with His Word is the most effective weapon to fight back with. This is one reason the Lord puts so much emphasis on His Word. Not only does it have life-

The power of the Word is awesome!



saving power, but through it He is able to guide you, to work in you—or control you, you might say. Through His Word you are able to claim His protection that will keep you through anything. The power of the Word is awesome! I wish I had a better word to describe it for you, but I don’t know of one that exists on Earth.

Back to my story: I didn’t have years and years’ worth of Scriptures memorized at the time I was

***psychological torture/warfare:** A wartime tactic that aims at destroying a captive’s will to resist. It includes the use of propaganda and overwhelming the victim with disorienting sights and sounds. An attempt is made to modify the captured victim’s behavior after first weakening his mind and body through prolonged fatigue, discomfort, malnutrition, and anxiety.

This is one reason the Lord puts so much emphasis on His Word. Not only does it have life-saving power, but through it He is able to guide you, to work in you.

taken captive. I sure wished I'd had. I wished I had paid more attention to my mama's sermons then. But God had mercy on me, and I know now it was because of my mama's faithful prayers for me. It's amazing how the things your parents ingrain in you as a child can all come back to you when the time is right.

Our captors attempted to weaken our bodies so they could get to our minds. They tried to disorient* us mentally—to weaken our spirits, and our minds. They did this by denying us food and sleep. In the beginning I felt some pangs of hunger, and the drowsiness of wanting to sleep, but I couldn't. We were forced to stand, or march back and forth, in order to stay awake. I knew that I had to resist these attempts to weaken me somehow, and strangely enough, I knew I had to fight in my mind. It was the Lord giving me those ideas, and I know now that it was my mama's prayers being answered.

During those trying times I would often sing to myself. I

would sing some of the old Gospel hymns that Mama had sung to me as a child. Those songs always put a glow on Mama's face, and they seemed to give her peace. She sang with feeling, with her whole heart, and

I would recite Psalm 23 for hours on end, singing songs in between.

It was as if those songs gave her strength to carry on. So I started singing. Sometimes I couldn't sing out loud, but I would sing them over and over again in my mind. *Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.*—Those words would ring in my ears as I would cry out to Jesus to please give me His saving grace to get me through the nightmare I was in. It was the words of that song that gave me the grace I needed to carry on. It brought me the peace that I could feel inside of me, and some of my buddies even told me later that my face began to shine.

As I sang on, I began to realize that my captors were becoming spellbound too, and I knew it was only the miracle-working power of Jesus. Not only was the Lord giving me grace and strength to endure this test, but He was also using this to reach their souls, to speak to their hearts and to give



***disorient**: to cause a temporary or permanent state of confusion regarding place, time, or personal identity.

them a chance to know His saving grace and His true love.

The starvation really wasn't so bad, and even though I felt hungry at first, after a while you hardly feel anything.—In fact, I felt so light, it was as if I could float off. It's a kind of light and airy feeling. The Lord helped me, and made it as serene as possible, because I was calling out to Him.

When my body had finally reached such a weakened state that my captors thought they had broken me, they began their demoralizing* tactics, trying to flood my mind with such torturous things as horrible screeching noises, records playing of voices and sounds that seemed like utter confusion to me. Then came the flood of lies—so many things they would repeat over and over and over again. I knew I had to resist

Even when I was too weak to utter anything else but the name of Jesus, He always came through and helped me.

them, so I made it a point to block out all these other things, and repeat the words of this song over and over again in my mind.—And Jesus protected me. I couldn't remember what they told us, because Jesus just blocked it all out.

***demoralizing**: to weaken or destroy in spirit; dishearten, confuse

I kept repeating the number of Scriptures and songs that I could recall from when I was a small child. *Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.* I would repeat it over and over in my mind. *I am the Good Shep-*



herd. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, and so on. I would recite Psalm 23 for hours on end, singing songs in between. “Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me” and “I Would Rather Have Jesus” were some of my favorites.

As the days went on, I kept positive and Godly thoughts going through my mind. I meditated on them. I concentrated on them. I fought to keep all other things out of my mind, and Jesus helped me. Even when I was too weak to utter anything else but the name of Jesus, He always came through and helped me.

The physical conditions of the prison camp were quite bad: little food, no medical supplies and filth everywhere. It was horrible,

Our captors attempted to weaken our bodies so they could get to our minds.

Those words would ring in my ears as I would cry out to Jesus.

but it didn't even faze me. I had reached a level of peace and tranquility that far surpassed any horrors of the mental anguish that my captors had hoped to inflict on me. It was the saving grace of Jesus. He was more powerful than all their tactics, than all their tricks and dirty blows.

Other guys who were being held prisoner along with me would ask me how I was able to cope, and I was able to tell them it was only Jesus. I found myself talking

to these guys much like my mama had talked to me when I was growing up. Things would come to my memory—the same stories that Mama had told me—and I

“We never could break him, and that proves that he had something greater than what we have.”



(Jesus:) My children, know that even in the most trying circumstances, your faith in Me will hold firm, even much more so than this man who knew Me only as a child and had not stayed close to Me. Yet My Words brought him close to Me in his hour of tribulation and held him till the very end, when I took him back into My arms. I will preserve and care for you, and do mighty things for you, and all the more so during times of captivity.

shared all these with my fellow prisoners. Many of the guys prayed with me, bowing their heads to ask Jesus for help. I taught them the songs and Scriptures I knew so they, too, could sing and recite them.

Then one day, after several months, I went Home to meet my Lord. I was weak and tired and my physical body was not able to keep up with the strain, the lack of food and lack of sleep and all the other things. I had trusted the Lord to keep me through it, or deliver me, one way or the other, and that's exactly what He did.—He delivered me into the glorious light of His Heavenly Kingdom, where I have since been able to learn to love Him more and learn all about Him and His wonderful ways.

After I had died, a very strange and yet wonderful thing happened. As my spirit hovered over my dead body, I was able to see the scene below. The prison guards came in to drag my body out and load it on the truck with a few other corpses. They looked at

my face—and I was smiling. Then they looked at each other and started to talk among themselves.

“We never were able to break this one. He was different. What was it? How was he able to resist? He was so strong.”

“You know what this means, don’t you?” one guard said to the other.

“What do you mean? What could it mean?”

“It means, comrade,” the first guard continued, “that this fellow had something stronger than we have. He died happy, can’t you see? We never could break him, and that proves that he had something greater than what we have. I have a feeling—a strange

feeling—that he took something with him when he died. Do you see his face? It does not show pain, it does not show grief; he seems happy. I have a strange feeling about this one. It’s as if he’s still watching us.”

In the weeks that followed, some of the guys I left behind in that camp—the ones who I taught the songs to—kept on singing, and Jesus helped them to resist. Those same guards saw that they, too, were not being won over or broken. Finally one day the two guards, curious to know what it was, came in secretly and asked my fellow prisoners how they could be so strong. That day, the same two guards who had loaded my body onto the truck received Jesus, and came to know the secret of why we couldn’t be broken. And as the news spread, it had a far-reaching effect, and many others were won to the Lord because of it. ◆

After I had died, a very strange and yet wonderful thing happened.



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