

Dear Friends,

We hope you are doing well and prospering in body and spirit.

This May is a special month for us for the following reasons...

1. May 11th was Mother's Day...I have the best mom in the world and, coincidentally, my kids have the best mom in the world!
2. May 13th was "Gotcha Day", marking exactly one year since Ellie Mingyun joined our family! We cannot believe how quickly this year has flown by!
You can visit the adoption blog for photos and video at: <http://elliebomccracken.blogspot.com>
3. May 21st will be our 20th wedding anniversary, made extra special this year by our friends Allen and Stephanie Harrison who share the exact same anniversary, and got creative and generous about how they could help make OURS special. Thanks, Harrisons!
4. May will finish up Kendra and Becky's time in the Philippines before they head on to Australia (where they will work with refugees in Melbourne), Zambia (where they will work at a camp for orphans), and Kenya (where they will help lead a retreat for Somalian refugee women and children). Thanks for your prayers and support for them. I will send out an update from Kendra via a separate e-mail. You can read their blog at: <http://visiontrip08.blogspot.com>

Please pray for the young Afghani man "O" whose story follows below. He came to the Lord here but is currently in Holland, awaiting an answer to his appeal for asylum. It is written in his own "refugee English" but it is a very sobering story. It is also written as his case for immigration, not as an evangelistic testimony. Try to imagine yourself experiencing these same things as a young teen. Only one of these things would traumatize most of us in a debilitating way for the rest of our life.

Thanks for standing with us. Hope your May is a special one!

Grateful,

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My father was born in Kabul and lost his father when he was 10 years old. They killed his father and he was a policeman in Kabul. When he was 12 years old his mother fell from 2nd floor of the house when she was hanging out the clothes, and she died. My father grew up with different families. When he was 18 he started working for politics. He was first a soldier and when he was 20 years old the government sent him to Russia to special politic university in Moscow. He met my mother there and a relationship they started. After 4 ½ years he finished university and moved back to Afghanistan but he was already married with my mother. He was 6 months in Afghanistan and

they sent him back to Moscow to keep him working.... like making bombs... like the different projects they had between different countries. After 10 months I was born in Rjazan, Russia (1988?). ("The calendar years in Iran are different than in the Netherlands calendar.")

My mother died in the hospital from operation when I was born. When this happened it changed my father inside and he decided to stop his work. Then he told the government I don't want to kill more people. It's enough to kill people by making guns or bombs for killing people. And the government told him that he must work for them because they sent him to university. For the time they can use him and he must not stop the work. Also he knew what project they wanted to do, and when this happened my father took the stuff he had, like papers and documents that he had from his work. We went and we were refugees in Iran because they told him that if he didn't work they will kill his son and they will kill him also.

We lived in Tehran and I grow up in Tehran. We had a very hard life. My father was going to work in the shop making watches. I was going to school. We were hiding ourself and every house we were living in we were using other names. In the house we had a gun because he was afraid. We moved every year to other houses. In Iran we were really afraid. We did not have contact with anybody.

One time 10 pm in the night the phone in our house was ringing. I was 13 years old. My father took the phone and after he answered he was really nervous. He went very fast and took the keys for his motorcycle, and his wallet, and his phone book, and some papers and told me go hide in the closet and not to come out until he is back. He went out and after a few minutes he came back again and said I must go with him. He was really afraid. I was asking him what is wrong. What happened? He said don't worry I am here. I won't leave you. We got on the motorcycle and we went to downtown Tehran. He told me to sit on the motorcycle and told me he would be back. If somebody comes near you and something happens, or you hear a voice or something, just run away. After 20 minutes my father came back. His face was white and on his forehead was blood. On his left hand was blood. He was not normal. He was dragging his foot. I asked him what happened. He didn't tell me. He said to just jump on the motorcycle.

We rode to the street that was going to Khavaran. When we got there in the middle of the street he stopped and he said to me to get off. I did, and right after I got off he fell down with the motorcycle. His face was really white and his eyes were red and from his mouth was coming blood and some yellow stuff. Also from an ear was coming blood. Also when he fell down he was shaking all over his body and suddenly it stopped. The people in the street helped me take him to the hospital on that street. The doctor said this man is dead. After 30 minutes a police car came and took me to the police station.

I was 1 week there in the jail with all kinds of people like killers. I was really afraid. In the jail was 5 men they hurt me so much. The room was dark and they raped me. After 1 week a soldier came and told me to come out. I went out and I went to the office there and they told me I could go.

I asked him what happened with my father. He said to me you must be happy we let you go from here and forget your father. If you know what problem your father had you would not go out from this police station. In the one week when I was there they were asking me what I know about my father and what happened. I was saying I don't know. They asked me do you think your father had a heart attack or something like that. I asked where is the body of my father and they didn't answer me. They gave me back the key of the motorcycle and the wallet of my father, but they did not give me back the telephone book or the papers that were with him.

After that I was going back to Khavaran to my house. When I went the door was closed. On the door was a paper from the bank saying we didn't pay and it was closed. That day was the 3rd of the month and we payed already on the 1st. When I was coming out from the house one car came near me and they pushed me in. They covered my eyes and put something on my head. They tied up my hands and my feet on one chair. They started hitting me. And they started

asking questions from me, about the work of my father and what I know from him. And about where are the papers, the documents he was taking from Russia. They hit me and they broke my right hand, my left foot from inside was bruised from the hitting. My ribs were forced down from being hit in the chest with wood, something in their hand, and the man kicking me.

Also they took hot water and poured it near my left knee. They cut with scissor my pinkie finger and on my index finger on my left hand. On the right they did the same. They were hitting me with brass knuckles and asking me the same questions. After 5 days one time I was on the floor. The things over my eyes were coming off. I saw the face of them – 3 men and one woman. They were just talking to each other in the room. Two of them look like Afghani people. The woman and the other man looked Russian – blond hair. After that they understand that I saw them. They put me on the chair again and started using electricity and a cable with wires on my chest and on my neck. After that I fainted again. Next day one of the men came to me and he said this is your last day. If you tell us where are the documents we will let you go. If you don't tell we will kill you. I had fallen down near the windows. My hands and feet were not tied. The window was open and the man busy with some books on the other side of the room.

Something in myself said just jump from this window. I was really afraid.

I was on the 2nd floor of the house but I jumped and I came down on the grass. The house was like a villa. I was just running far, as far as I can from that place. I went to one park and I sleep three days in a park, cold weather. I sat on a bench and I couldn't move. My foot was swollen and it could not move. All my body was in pain.

Somebody came and said my name. I saw it was the friend of my father. He asked me what happened and I tell all the things to him. He took me to a hospital. I was 1 month in the hospital. They did an operation on my hand and my foot, and treated my burns. After that the friend of my father said he was going to Turkey and he asked me if I wanted to go with him or not. Actually he said I must go with him or these people will take you and kill you. Also he made a photo of my injuries. He said if you go to another place you will have something to show to them.

From Iran to Turkey we were one month on the way. First we took a bus from Tehran to Kordestan. We crossed the border with a horse. After that we were walking in the mountains and after we went with one truck to Ankara. And from there we went with another truck to Istanbul.

I was in Istanbul 4 months. First in Haghsarai and after another house in Zatonbornu. After that the friend was leaving to Greece. He took me and we were 5 days on the way. First we went by truck to the border. We crossed the border with a boat. In that time so much people died because of drowning, but we made it. We were in Athens and the friend of my father left earlier than me from Greece. He went to Norway.

I was living alone in Athens. It was there I became a Christian. I was baptized and grew in my faith. Then was beginning other problems for me with Muslim Afghanistan people about the religion. I was talking with so many people about Jesus. Also I was going to Helping Hands. They gave me a house because I had nothing. I didn't have clothes, even I was taking food from the garbage and eating that, from hunger.

When I became a Christian everything changed. The Muslim Afghanis were trying to tell me to leave this religion. If you don't do it we will kill you. One night a group was coming and they were just hitting me. In the middle of this time I decided to leave Greece. I try to do that. I asked one smuggler to make a passport for me. That time was the Olympic Games 2004.

Near the end of the Olympic Games one time in the night I was walking to the house, I was living at the Helping Hands house. A bunch of people came and they had something hiding their faces. They put me into something... like plastic... like a tarp... my hand was tied and my feet were tied. They put me in the trunk of a car. They took me to a place near the sea and they threw me into the water. I was lucky because at that time a boat... God saved me... the boat of the police was

crossing there. They took me out from the water and asked me who did this to you? I did see their faces. I didn't know what to tell them.

That time I was afraid and I took the passport and I went with the bus to one island of Greece. From there I bought a ticket to Italy. I tried first time, and second time, but I couldn't. They understand that the passport is not mine. I came out from where the ship is and two boys tried to take me to a dark place to rob me. Again I was lucky because the police were crossing there. God was with me. After that I went back to the harbor and bought the ticket of the last ship. I prayed and I went inside the ship without a problem.

After 15 hours I was in Italy, Ancona. From Ancona I took a train to Rome. When I was in Rome I only had 2 euros and I was sleeping in the street for one week. I remember a woman I met in Greece from America and she was living in Virginia. Her name is Darlene. I went to a calling center where after the phone conversation you pay. My call was exactly 2 euros so I could pay when I came out. Darlene sent me about \$300.

With that money I bought a ticket to Paris. From Paris I bought a ticket to Amsterdam. In Amsterdam I called a woman living in Netherlands. I had her number from the friend of my father. She said to me if I say I was in Greece they will send me back to there. I must tell some other thing. I was afraid to go back to Greece because I tried so much to live there and I had so much problem with the Muslim Afghanistan people. That is why I lied. Also I was thinking if I tell the story of my father the police of Netherlands will get me and put me in prison. For me police is the same as those Iran. I keep that in myself.

About two months ago I had a phone call from Norway at 4 am. Somebody in the place of the friend of my father was calling me. He was trying to know where I am living, but I understand it was not my father's friend but another man. I had so many phone calls in these two months from them. In the first phone call he told me I have something for you. I asked what is that. He said it is the phone book of your father and it has your picture in it.

They told me my father was a terrorist and they asked me what I know about my father and if I have those documents from my father I must send back to them. They said to me if I know something about my father or if I see what is inside the document I am one of them. If somebody is in this work they can never get out of it. Like your father--he wanted to stop but we killed him.

The last phone call I had was 1 December. They gave me one week time to send the documents back to them. They said if I don't send back to them they will kill me. And they told me exactly what they were doing in that villa in Iran to me. I am really afraid of them. I don't want to start again running to other country because when I came in Netherlands was beginning a big rest for me. Netherlands was a paradise for me. Here I can go to school. They give me house, food, clothes, I don't need to be afraid from people. I had very nice time till now here with so many friends from church and school.

I decide to trust God and the government and that is why I tell all this story. Till now I saw so many things from God and now I trust Him. He has blessed me with so much. When I have trust in Him I must tell the truth.

Now I just tell the truth. I am sure God is with me and He is helping me. Also I pray He touch the heart of the person who is reading this also.