

Hearts OF FIRE

Eight Women *in the*
Underground Church
and Their Stories
of Costly Faith

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Many of the names and places in this book’s testimonies have been changed to protect the identities of those represented. It was also necessary to omit details concerning ministry activities that continue within these nations to protect the lives of those involved. Some court transcripts and other quoted materials have been edited for brevity and clarity.

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Dedicated to
Sabina Wurmbrand,
a voice for martyrs

Foreword

I am humbled to be asked to write a foreword for such a book as this. I would not begin to group myself with these stalwart women of the faith.

As I read their incredible stories of God-given courage, I could relate to many of their feelings. During the year (May 2001–June 2002) that my husband, Martin, and I spent in captivity with Abu Sayyaf terrorists in the Philippine jungle, I, too, felt hopeless, wanting to die. I was homeless and starving . . . but for me, I knew that as soon as my release came, I would return to my life of relative ease. Now here I sit in America with a beautiful home, plenty to eat, and a support group—while these women continue to endure hardship as good soldiers of Christ.

So when I'm taking a nice hot bath, I pray. When I'm putting on makeup and fixing my hair to get ready to go speak, I pray. When I'm running errands for my kids, I pray. When I pass an encouraging sign outside a church, I pray for all those who don't have the "infrastructure" I have. For those who are suffering because they believe in Jesus. For those who think they are all alone, yet remain true to their faith.

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I pray for them the same thing I prayed for myself in the jungle: “Lord, let them feel You close to them. Help them remain faithful as this situation just keeps going from bad to worse. Show them a glimpse of Your goodness so they know they are not alone. And at the end, I know You’ll be there.”

Oh, that each of us reading this book would readily commit ourselves anew to letting God use us however He sees fit—even if it means giving up freedom and comfort. The day may come when we are beaten or even killed for being a Christ-follower. Let us take courage from these simple women.

God will not test us above what we are able. He will, with the testing, make a way to escape (provide everything we need) so that we will be able to bear it. I choose to believe that God does all things well. Man does not. We have made a mess of this beautiful world. If there is anything good in this life, it is from God. He has a plan, and He is sovereign. We wait patiently for His timing when He will make all things new.

Until then, may He give us the grace to live for Him, as these women are doing. He is worthy.

—Gracia Burnham
New Tribes Mission
Author, *In the Presence of My Enemies*

Acknowledgments

*W*hen we first undertook this project, we knew it would take quite a team. First we needed Christian women who would be willing to share their testimonies. Without them, there would be no book, and to them we express our heartfelt appreciation.

Each chapter (with the exception of Sabina Wurmbrand's) also required a number of field personnel, and some required translators. In more than half the stories, secret locations had to be arranged and safety protocols implemented. Needless to say, we could not have undertaken this project without the support of The Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) field staff and coworkers. Due to current risks, most of these workers cannot be named. But we wish to extend our thanks to all who helped in each of the countries where we traveled.

Assisting with writing and editing were Todd Nettleton (also on staff with VOM) and Sue Ann Jones. You were both a tremendous help. Thank you.

It is not always easy to get behind projects that deal with persecution and some of the more harsh realities of our faith. But Greg

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Daniel and the team at W Publishing Group (who originally published this book) have proven their commitment in bringing these incredible stories of tenacity and courage to the forefront. Thanks for making *Hearts of Fire* come alive.

—The Voice of the Martyrs

Introduction

Hearts Ablaze with Courage and Conviction

Kidnapped. Beaten. Imprisoned. In many parts of the world today these words are synonymous with being a Christian. And for Christian women in these areas, another challenge exists: the social stigma of being looked upon as lower class, unfit for leadership, and belonging under the control and guidance of men.

Hearts of Fire is the stories of eight women who, despite such circumstances, have shown incredible courage, conviction, and love for Jesus Christ and His church. In the harshest settings, they have become leaders who exercised extraordinary boldness and tenacity, refusing to shrink from the needs and opportunities that confronted them. Ironically, only in suffering have they had equal rights with their male counterparts; in some instances, they have suffered even worse.

When we first considered a book of testimonies about Christian women persecuted for their faith, we faced a number of challenges. First and foremost, we wanted the testimonies to be as contemporary as possible. This required that we travel to each nation where these women currently reside and in many cases

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still face grave danger. We also wanted to present examples of women who had not only faced times of personal suffering but also displayed leadership qualities in ministry. Finally, beyond the dramatic stories of pain and torment, we wanted to portray inspiring examples of steadfast hope and show how these women, even in the darkest places, found ways to let Christ's love shine through.

It is important to note that the women highlighted in *Hearts of Fire* are but a small sample of the countless women around the world who face similar situations. We chose women who would represent a variety of regions where Christians are persecuted, and with whom we could arrange to meet individually. Those we interviewed usually told us they thought others would be better candidates with more dramatic stories. None wanted to call attention to herself as an example of Christian heroism.

The stories comprise an amazing diversity. While some of the women served years in captivity, others served no time at all but endured other hardships. They vary widely in age and represent many different backgrounds, from Christian to Muslim, Hindu to atheist. Even more amazing were the similarities of their stories: each woman displayed a deep drive and a strong conviction that pushed her beyond her frailties, past human expectation.

It is our prayer that you come away from reading *Hearts of Fire* with a deeper faith and steadier direction for handling life's difficulties. If you are only amazed at these incredible testimonies, we have failed. If you can find in your own life similarities with one or more of these testimonies, and if you can gain strength from these examples of extraordinary courage, we have succeeded, and so have these women who have so graciously offered to share their stories with you.

When we first undertook this project we planned to include a

Introduction: Hearts Ablaze with Courage and Conviction

short devotional thought at the conclusion of each chapter. However, after compiling the stories, we realized none were needed. Embedded within each testimony are precious gems of faith and fortitude. We trust these qualities will kindle a spark in your own life as you experience *Hearts of Fire*.

—The Voice of the Martyrs

Adel

Amid the Horror... Hope

INDONESIA

5:00 P.M., MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 2000

Under the shadow of swaying palm trees, Adel gathered the children together, about fifty of them. Her voice rose as she began to sing “Onward, Christian Soldiers.” She could see the fear in the children’s eyes as they joined in the song.

“I don’t want to die!” one of the children called out. He was not yet ten years old.

“We’re not going to die. Come, clap your hands with us.” Adel leaned toward him, speaking directly into his ear to be heard above the children’s voices.

The scared boy reluctantly joined in. They sang another song, again clapping their trembling hands together. Adel was attempting to drown out the shouting—the screams and the terror—drifting up the hillside from less than a mile below.

She knew she had to keep the children from crying, especially the older ones. If one of them started wailing, there would be mass hysteria. Adel admired their bravery. Even the other parents who

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were clustered in small groups around the children seemed to gain strength from their spirited youngsters.

As the singing continued, Adel gazed over the assembled youth and spotted her own two children. Christina was already nine, and Christiano, seven. Adel could be brave, she reassured herself; she could be brave for her children—all the children. Her trust was firmly rooted in Christ. She worried about them, though—especially Christiano, her little “Anto.” He was so young, and small for his age.

Adel silently prayed for God’s protection and again was thankful she’d grabbed her Bible before fleeing her home. She opened it now, carefully turning the worn pages to a familiar passage, and read aloud: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). Then Adel flipped to the back of her Bible, where numerous songs were printed, and she led the children in another chorus.

While they were singing, some of the children began complaining that they were hungry and thirsty. They had been on the hill since noon, and now the setting sun cast a vivid, tawny glow over the sky. Sunsets could be so spectacular here on their small Indonesian island of Dodi. But today the twilight was an ominous prelude to the darkness about to fall on their village.

Suddenly the shouts of her husband, Methu, pierced through the children’s singing. “Run! Adel, run!” Adel rushed to the edge of the hill and struggled to see in the waning sunlight. She could barely make out the silhouettes of men scrambling up the steep trail. Again Methu’s voice rang out. “Take the children, Adel! Hurry! You must run into the jungle.”

Instead, Adel froze, paralyzed by the crackling sounds of fire now drifting up the hillside as smoke ascended into the darkening sky. *They have set the entire village ablaze.* Every house would be consumed, she knew, including her own.

Adel: Amid the Horror . . . Hope

She agonized over the choice she must make. Should she help Methu as he made his way up the rocky embankment, or should she run to her children? It was all happening too fast. In the same way a person's life can pass through her memory in an instant, Adel's past and future now collided in her mind. Two wonderful children . . . a loving husband . . . life had been good.

She turned toward the children, then glanced one last time at Methu. And in that instant, she remembered an uninvited, audacious seventeen-year-old who had stubbornly seated himself on her mother's couch . . .

“Only God Can Separate You Now”

JULY 1989

“Mom, he looks like a monkey!” Adel hissed, peeking out from the kitchen door toward the young man waiting in the living room.

Her mother was not impressed. Adel might be too young to get married, but she could still show a little respect and appreciation for the young man's relentless determination.

He arrived at their house at approximately the same time each day. Adel didn't know if she was more flattered or annoyed as, each day, Methu confidently settled himself on the couch and repeated the same request. Actually, Adel had answered him numerous times, but Methu was either refusing to accept her answer or just pretending not to hear her.

“I don't want to get married. I'm too young. And even if I did want to get married, I don't want to marry *you!*” Adel persisted. She was seventeen too, and her beauty had recently blossomed. But she had no interest in starting a relationship—although she certainly had plenty of opportunities.

Methu offered no argument nor took offense at her impetuous

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remarks. He just sat there and patiently explained again to Adel that she was to be his wife. “It is God’s plan. Even if you think I look like a monkey.”

Adel chuckled as she caught the hint of her mother’s smile. Undeterred, Methu once more made his request: “So, will you marry me?”

She knew there was no logic in answering, so Adel just sat there, wondering when he would go away. Finally Methu got up to leave, but before departing he removed his outer shirt, folded it neatly, and placed it on her lap. “There,” he said. “You won’t answer me, so my shirt will wait in my absence.”

Adel couldn’t help being flattered by his youthful yet sincere gesture. Maybe he wasn’t so bad after all . . .

Three months later, Adel and Methu were married.

It was a traditional wedding according to local customs. It started early on a bright October afternoon and went long into the night. Two complete meals were served to the entire village that came out to witness the joyous event. It all seemed to go by in a flash as Adel fought off intermittent waves of anxiety, worrying again that she was too young and marriage was a terrible mistake. She was the first among seven siblings to marry; how could she possibly comprehend her new obligations as a wife? Only the words of the pastor after the ceremony brought the new bride comfort. “Adel,” he had told her, “only God can separate you and Methu now.”

Adel became pregnant a month after the wedding, and although she carried the baby full term, the child was stillborn after a long and intensive labor. Adel and Methu were devastated.

But five months later, Adel was pregnant again. This time the baby was born three months early and wasn’t expected to live. Friends who came to visit comforted Adel and encouraged her to “be strong when the baby dies.”

Adel: Amid the Horror . . . Hope

“My baby’s not going to die!” Adel answered obstinately. Her heart was entirely convinced, and she refused to be swayed by the opinion of her family or neighbors. She would *not* lose another child.

Adel gently laid her newborn daughter on a pillow and softly spoke to the tiny girl, praying to God at the same time. “Why are you here, Christina?” she whispered. “You didn’t reach your full time in my womb, but here you are. And even though you are so small, Methu and I love you so much. And I know God is going to protect you.”

To the amazement of her family and the villagers, Christina developed into a healthy toddler and was joined two and a half years later by her brother, Christiano.

Adel and Methu couldn’t have been happier. Soon after Christiano was born they moved into their own home. It was a simple three-room house made mostly from bamboo, and it had a dirt floor. It was humble, but it was theirs. Perhaps when the children were older they could afford a better, larger house. That would be something to look forward to. For now, though, they were happy just to be out from under the roof of Methu’s parents.

Nearly all the families of Adel’s village were Christian, and she enthusiastically assisted with the church’s youth programs. There were more than fifty children close in age to Christina and Christiano, and Adel loved to read them the same exciting Bible stories her grandfather had once read to her. It seemed fitting that she was now doing the same work as her grandfather—preaching the gospel—even if it was to neighborhood children.

The Impending Jihad

Life passed with little trouble for Adel and those in her village, until the neighboring Muslims paid their first “official” visit.

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Although she wouldn't realize it at the time, the nightmare actually started at 3:00 p.m. on September 9, 1999—a day that, looking back, Adel will never forget. At the sound of a nearby commotion she hurried outside and immediately caught sight of the banner. On it only two words were printed in large block letters: “*Cinti Damai*,” meaning “Love Peace.” Clustered around the banner were thirty men, women, and children from a Muslim village named Dahma.

“People of Dodi,” a dark-skinned, middle-aged man proclaimed, “we are your neighbors, and we should commit to each other to live in peace.” There was no sound system, but his booming voice flowed easily through the crowd. He stood tall and lean on the old wooden platform of the meeting house. There should be no misunderstandings or fighting between the Muslim and Christian villages, he said. They should all live in peace.

Adel and the others who had crowded around the platform thought this was peculiar considering there hadn't been any previous confrontations, but they extended a hand of friendship to their visitors, who stayed the remainder of the afternoon.

Later that evening, after Methu had returned from work in the local mines, Adel related the events. “But what about the rumor?” Methu questioned.

A strange piece of gossip had been circulating that the ninth day of the ninth month of 1999 would be a dark day for Christians on the island of Dodi. However, Methu and Adel had dismissed the rumor as just that. Now they considered the Muslims' visit and agreed there seemed to be no apparent threat. Actually it had been a jovial atmosphere as their children played together.

Nearly four months passed without an incident or cause for suspicion, and the Dodi residents assumed the rumor was unfounded—until just after Christmas, when Yulpus, a young merchant, returned to the village after a failed attempt to leave

Adel: Amid the Horror . . . Hope

the island. Seeing him again so soon after he had left, the villagers asked him why he had returned so quickly.

“They wouldn’t let me leave,” Yulpius announced.

“Who? Why not?” one man asked as others pressed forward with increasing anxiety.

Yulpius continued, “A number of Muslim men stopped me, and I don’t know why. At first they simply told me not to travel right now, that it was too dangerous. I protested and told them I needed to leave the island to get more supplies, but they didn’t seem to care. They got really aggravated and seemed offended that I was a Christian. I recognized some of the men as ones who were part of the group that visited us to proclaim the so-called peace. I didn’t want any further trouble, so I turned around and came back home.”

Adel, Methu, and many others started to mull over Yulpius’s story, rethinking the events of September 9. But with no evidence of imminent danger, there was little they could do. Then, on January 10, their worst fears swept through their village like a rampant storm.

Adel was resting with an ailing Christiano around noon when they were awakened by the sounds of a commotion among the neighbors. Adel ran out her front door and gasped at the sight of large columns of smoke rising in the distance. A nearby village—a Christian village—was burning. Then came the rising shouts of panic. They must flee their homes. Three thousand armed Muslims were on their way, and there was little hope of stopping the impending *jihad* (Arabic for “holy war”).

Adel ran back inside, yelling for Christina and Anto. But no one answered. The pounding in Adel’s heart grew louder as she frantically searched for her children, running back outside and screaming their names. Finally someone told her they had been seen already making their way up the hill behind the village. Adel

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ran back inside once more to hurriedly grab a few things. As she headed again for the door she spotted her Bible on the table. She grabbed it . . . and fled.

“Mom, Are We Going to Die?”

6:00 P.M., MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 2000

Methu and the other village men had held off the Muslim attackers for nearly four hours, but there were simply too many of them, and they were well armed with machetes, torches, and firearms.

Now the entire village was ablaze, and the mob's shouts of “*Allah Akbar! Allah Akbar!*” (“God is great! God is great!”) filled the air. Methu and the other men frantically fled up the slippery embankment, hoping the *jihad* warriors would be satisfied with the destruction of their village. Instead a sadistic rage seemed to spread among them, and soon they were also scrambling up the hill, wildly firing their rifles in the direction of the assembled Christians.

Methu and Adel swiftly gathered their children and their own elderly mothers as everyone began fleeing in different directions. Hoping to avoid the rampant gunfire, they threw themselves into the deep grass and proceeded to crawl as quickly as possible into the jungle. But the strenuous journey on their hands and knees proved more difficult as a heavy rain began to fall, turning the bare ground into a continuous pool of mud.

After crawling for almost two hours through the dense jungle, they came to an abandoned shed on the edge of a coconut plantation. Constructed of wood with three sides and a roof, it had been used by farmers as a respite from the sweltering afternoon heat during harvesttime. Hopefully, tonight it would serve as a sanctuary for the weary family. They were too exhausted to travel any farther.

Adel: Amid the Horror... Hope

Christina and Christiano fell asleep almost immediately as Adel laid them down on a bamboo mat they found in the deserted building. Like the rest of the family, the children were soaking wet and covered with mud. And while the deteriorating structure provided some shelter, the roof was full of gaping holes allowing steady trickles of rain to fall on them.

Adel couldn't hold it in any longer. Like the rain, the tears poured down her face as she wept aloud.

When she had regained control, she and Methu huddled together for a brief and somber time of prayer, then they quietly sat with each of their mothers throughout the fearful night. As dawn broke, Christina and her brother awoke, slowly coming to understand that the horrific nightmare they thought they had dreamed was, in fact, reality. For some time they sat silently, staring at the adults. Their wide eyes begged for a few words of comfort, but a deathly silence overshadowed the frightened family and no one knew what to say.

Finally Christiano whimpered, "Mommy, I'm hungry."

Adel's eyes closed again as she tried to hold back the tears, but by the time she could bring her young son into her lap, she was weeping uncontrollably.

"Please don't cry like that, Adel," Methu pleaded. "I'll go look for food." He tried to reassure his wife, but he knew she had reached her limit. Adel's heart was being ripped apart as she helplessly witnessed the suffering of her precious children.

Methu was going back to the destroyed village to look for food. Adel begged him not to go, but she knew they had to do something. They couldn't remain in the shed without food or water.

Time seemed to pass in slow motion after Methu left. A deep sense of fear continued to grip Adel. Unable to fight the anxiety, she led her family back into the jungle. They eventually came upon others from their village who were hiding along the edge of

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a cornfield. Adel led Christina and Anto and the mothers through the neat rows of corn, and they began picking the dried ears. At least they would have something to eat.

A few hours later Methu rejoined his family carrying twelve cans of Coca-Cola. It was all he could find. But as the children reached for the tabs to open the cans, gunshots rang out, echoing like rolling thunder throughout the field. No one knew which direction the shots were coming from, so they threw themselves to the ground, having no clear thought of where to run. Finally Christina looked up at Adel and asked, “Mom, are we going to die?”

Yes, *we are*, was the thought that ripped through Adel’s mind, but she knew she had to be brave for her children. She pulled both of them together and told them everything would be OK. But Adel knew her words of comfort couldn’t replace the dreadful reality of their situation. As the sounds of gunfire continued, she knew what she had to do. It would be the most difficult conversation she would ever have with her children, but Adel had no choice. She had to tell them . . .

“Christina and Anto, please look at me and listen very carefully. If we are caught by those of the *jihad*, they will ask you if you want to become a Muslim. If you say no, they may kill you.” Adel looked directly into the children’s eyes. She knew there was only one right answer, but how could children so young be expected to be so brave?

Both her children answered simply, “We want to follow Jesus.”

Without a second thought, Adel opened the Bible she had brought with her and turned to the one passage that had continually run through her mind since she had fled her home. Adel’s grandfather had read it to her so many times as a child it was practically etched into her heart: Psalm 23. She instructed her two children to repeat after her and began reciting the words, “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want . . . Yea, though I walk

Adel: Amid the Horror... Hope

through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me . . .” She continued until both of them had committed the psalm to memory. They appeared so brave, but Adel wondered if they truly comprehended the gravity of the situation.

Feeling the tears forming again in the corner of her eyes, she hastily wiped them away with the back of her hand and asked, “Christina, aren’t you afraid they may kill you if you say you are a Christian?”

Christina brought her face close to her mother’s, looked straight into her eyes, and softly answered, “Mom, please don’t worry. I’m not afraid to die.”

After the gunshots ceased, those in the cornfields eventually scattered. Adel, Methu, and their family made their way back into the dense jungle, where they traveled wearily for another two days. They walked well into the darkness of night and slept only a few hours before rising again at dawn. At one point Methu had met others from their village and learned from them that some Christians had already been killed. Worried for his loved ones, he just pushed them deeper into the jungle.

Everyone was exhausted, and finally Methu and Adel realized they could not push the children any farther. Although they had a small amount of fresh coconut milk, the hunger pains were growing worse, and Adel cried each time one of the children asked for food. They had also met up with Methu’s father and brother.

They came to what Methu believed would be a safe place to rest, and he gathered some dry palm leaves for the children to sit on. Hearing the rippling sounds of a stream below the ravine, he and his brother decided to venture down to see if they could find something to eat.

At such a tender age, Anto didn’t understand why they hadn’t had any food in the last few days and bluntly asked if he could

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have some rice and fish. “Your father will be right back, and maybe he will have some fish. Then we can eat,” Adel told him, attempting to offer some encouragement. But she knew it wasn’t likely that Methu would find food for them, and she pulled Anto close, softly humming a chorus and gently rocking him.

The All-Powerful Blood of Jesus

Less than ten minutes had passed when she heard Methu scream. At first Adel thought he was crazy to yell like that, knowing the *jihad* warriors could be close by. Then she realized Methu had already been surrounded, and he was yelling for Adel and the rest of the family to flee. Again she heard the words that had chilled her heart just a few days earlier. “Run, Adel! Run!”

Before Methu could cry out again, Adel heard the rapid crackle of an automatic weapon. She immediately pushed herself up but with Anto’s arms still wrapped around her neck, she stumbled. She turned just in time to catch a glimpse of Christina running in the direction of Methu’s cries. Adel drew a breath to yell at her to stop, but it was too late. They were surrounded by men in long white robes.

Anto was lying on the ground where Adel had dropped him. When he tried to get up, one of the men swung his machete and caught him across the back with the broad side of the blade. Adel screamed at the top of her lungs and threw herself on her son to protect his small body from another blow. She could see her son’s face turning white with fear as he slipped into shock, but her attempts to help Anto proved useless as one of the Muslim men grabbed her long black hair and easily lifted her into the air.

A bloodstained machete was pressed against Adel’s neck as the men forced her toward a pair of bamboo trees. She knew their intentions as they began tearing at her clothing. She was still

Adel: Amid the Horror . . . Hope

clutching her Bible, but it fell to the ground as easily as her clothes. Adel closed her eyes, silently praying for her family and begging God to save her from being raped.

Adel then heard the screams of her mother, her mother-in-law, and her precious Anto, and she knew they were being massacred by the vicious thugs who had driven them from their home. It was too much to bear. On the edge of fainting, she fell to her knees as she saw those who had attacked her family turn and come toward her. Blood dripped from the edges of their machetes. Anto's blood.

"Oh, God!" Adel cried. She didn't know how she could go on. One of the men took off his sweaty turban and tied it around Adel's head. On it was written "*Allah Akbar.*" With her last bit of strength Adel shouted, "The blood of Jesus is all-powerful!"

"She is a Christian! A pig! A stinking pig! Let's just rape her and get it over with," a voice sneered. A larger number of enraged Muslims now surrounded Adel, discussing what to do with her. They were speaking in their local dialect, not realizing Adel could understand everything they were saying.

Attempting to conceal her tears, Adel quietly prayed in her heart, *Lord, please help them realize what they are doing. It is so evil . . . please make them understand. They cannot know what they are doing. It isn't humanly possible.* As she continued to pray, from the commotion in front of her a hushed, soft voice whispered, "Adel, is that you?" She looked up to discover a man they had captured from her village. His name was Hans.

Hans had also been stripped naked and was bleeding severely. Her heart fell deeper into despair; she was certain he would not survive the day. She asked him if he had seen Methu or Christina. He shook his head no.

One of the men bundled up Adel's clothing, shoving it into her arms. She was not allowed to put it on. She looked down at

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her Bible, which had been torn to shreds.

The two captives were marched up a steep mountain trail with machetes prodding the most vulnerable parts of their beaten bodies. As the trail narrowed, Adel looked down over the ridge, realizing how high she was and how easy it might be to jump. She knew she would probably be killed if she jumped, but that was OK. *Help me, Lord! Please, help me,* she continually pleaded. Resisting the temptation to jump, she finally came to the top of the mountain, where well over a thousand *jihad* warriors were gathered. They were of all different ages, some barely teenagers, but each was dressed exactly the same in a long white robe with a tightly wound turban on his head.

At gunpoint, one of the soldiers forced Adel and Hans to stand one behind the other. The soldier was middle-aged with broad shoulders. He laid his rifle by his side and slowly removed a long machete from its sheath. Adel looked around, realizing she and Hans were the only two Christians in a sea of white robes. She closed her eyes, believing, even hoping, it would finally be over.

Within seconds, she felt the warm flow of blood running down her face and body. “The blood of Jesus is all-powerful!” she screamed again and again. Hans was screaming too. And she could hear the angry voices of other men yelling and chanting in the distance. She dared not open her eyes. If she just kept them closed long enough, she thought, she could open them on the other side, in heaven. But after waiting for what seemed like hours, she couldn’t help but lift her eyelids. In front of her was the mutilated body of Hans.

Seven Simple Words

Adel was covered with blood but couldn’t tell if it was hers or Hans’s. She was in severe pain from the repeated blows of the