

# The Surprise Wedding

William and Carolyn Farag

## **Preface**

This is the amazing, true story of how God brought two people together in marriage from totally different and distant cultures. This wedding was very slow in coming but very quickly accomplished when it came to light. It was unconventional, sometimes funny, and full of surprises. Yet it also demonstrates kingdom principles foundational to discerning God's direction in the choice of a marriage partner and in how the relationship can be lived out. Strong, godly marriages are very important to the purposes of God in the earth. Our desire in sharing our story is to give hope, insight, and encouragement to others who are just beginning their own awesome adventures in discovering the plan of God for their life.

2018 by William and Carolyn Farag

## **The Surprise Wedding**

Sometimes I wondered if I had heard God tell me that He had a husband for me or just imagined it. Yet the first private word and a few subsequent ones on the same subject had come at times when I was prepared to remain single and was telling the Lord so. But the years were flying by and any time a marriageable man appeared on the scene, God let me know that he was not for me. Once or twice I even had a nightmare about approaching the altar to say my marriage vows. It was a nightmare because I had an inner knowing that if I said those vows, I would die! Now I know that if I had married one of those men, God's special plan for my life would have been aborted. Ah, God's plan! Not at all like mine but much more difficult and much more wonderful than I could ever plan for myself!

### **The Call**

This is how I was launched into that plan. In my last year of studies I was training to become a high school history teacher. It was dawning on me that I did not want to continue in that work. Actually I did not know what I was to become or do. Suddenly I realized that I must know what God wanted for me and began to pray fervently that God would show me. "What is the work that You want me to do??" I kept asking Him.

A new student on campus talked about God talking to him. Finally I asked him, "How is it that God talks to you?" I thought, if God is still talking to people these days, I want to hear Him.

He answered cryptically, "It's the baptism in the Holy Spirit."

"What's that? I've never heard of it," I responded. I had attended a protestant church all my life but had never heard much about the Holy Spirit or not a word about this baptism.

I can't remember any more of that conversation but a short time later when our term ended, I joined a carload of friends to visit the home of this young man. That Roman Catholic family had a quite a few children so beds for all of us were no problem.

My hunger to experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit increased the more I heard of it and saw evidence of the Spirit's presence in others who had received this baptism. When the young man's father asked me if I wanted to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, I eagerly sat in the prayer circle. He encouraged me to speak in tongues. Nothing forceful was happening but I ventured a syllable or two. He encouraged me to keep going, so I did. All I could say was, "Hiyana" but the more I said it, the more peace and great joy began to fill my being. I was so excited about this experience with God.

Another result of that weekend was the decision to attend Urbana '70. That huge conference in Illinois would provide an opportunity to meet Christians serving in other countries, learn about their organizations, and see if there was any suitable work advertised that I might do. Maybe teaching wouldn't be so bad if I could to it in Australia, for instance. I had seen many photos of

Australia and wanted to go there. One afternoon I went to small section devoted to jobs in education. My mood was not good because I was tired, cold, hungry, and unsure of how to get back to my friends in the midst of the great crowd. Not a word was said about Australia! The speaker kept going on about the need for teachers in Niger. My discomfort grew as I realized my qualifications were good. I was trained to teach and I also spoke French. I couldn't find a suitable excuse not to go. I was about to finish my bachelor's degree, not employed, not in debt, and not engaged to be married. It was just that I did NOT at all want to go to Africa. The Spirit reminded me that I had said to God, "I will go anywhere. I will do anything You want me to do." Under conviction and the fear of God I stayed until the end of the meeting and gave my name and contact information to the speaker. I hoped that he would not be interested in me. But he was, and we arranged to talk more later. I prayed, "Lord, if You make it clear to me, I will go. But I don't want to do something stupid, something that is not of You."

What I expected God to do, I don't know, but after four days I knew that He wanted me to go to Africa, which was one of that last places I had wanted to go before. I knew that because He had totally changed my heart about the subject. I could hardly wait to go! That was when Philippians 2:12,13 came alive to me. *"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure."* God had not only enabled me to obey but to do so with zeal and joy.

In the process of finding my way to Africa, I spent a year studying at Elim Bible Institute. On the first Sunday God sent Brother Costa Deir to preach about the danger of a rebellious spirit. The more he spoke, the greater my conviction grew. At the altar call after his sermon I ran to the front confessing the rebellion in my the heart that the school rules had exposed. I asked for forgiveness and also that God would give me a submissive spirit. I rose a different person. It was evident in my ability to obey the rules and the authorities from my heart and in faith. It was an important foundation stone that had been laid in my life.

### **The Promise**

Another significant experience happened in this period. As I lay in my dormitory bunk bed and thought about going to Africa, I realized that I might never be married. "Thy Maker is thy husband..." from Isaiah 54 came to mind. "O Lord, I trust that You will fill the place of a husband to me."

"But I have a husband for you!" the Spirit replied.

"Really?? Is he here at Elim now?" I asked eagerly.

"No, the time is not now. It is yet a far off," was the answer and the end of the conversation.

### **Serving**

In August 1972 I arrived in Kenya. (The door to Niger had closed to me.) For two years I taught English, Bible, and Social Studies in a girls' boarding school in the very southwestern corner of the country where there was no telephone, electricity, or running water. Needless to say, there are stories to tell. For the next 18 years the Lord continued to lead me to different places to work. First He had me get my Masters degree in Teaching English as a Second Language.

Then the Lord sent me to teach in Iran briefly, in Afghanistan, in Taiwan, in China, on the West Bank of the Jordan, and then in Egypt.

Leaving China in the summer of 1985 was very difficult for two reasons. One reason was because God had clearly shown me to leave China and told my best friend and coworker, Carolyn Potucek, to continue there. This was strange to us. We had met during our Junior year of college in Heidelberg, Germany and had worked together at the leading of the Lord in Kenya and every place I went after that. This separation made our walk lonelier and more challenging. The other reason was that once again the Lord had told me to leave my work place without telling me where He would have me work next. I really did not like those transition times when I lived in my parents house without a plan as to what I would do next or when. Now I can see that God was teaching me to trust Him, to be patient, to serve Him in the little daily things, and to find my identity and worth not in my job title but in who God says I am. Working that into my heart took pressure and time.

January 1986 dawned and I still had no new direction from the Lord. I went to Elim for their week of prayer to make sure that God had my undivided attention. In some ways I felt at home there; in other ways not at all. Deep in my heart I knew my calling was to serve God in other countries. I desired to be married and had a word from the Lord that I would be, but at 37 years of age I still wasn't. Who could I marry and yet continue to walk in my calling? Maybe it was better that I not marry, I thought, as I remembered the rigors of living in various places and especially in Iran and Afghanistan in the midst of revolutions. That would have been much harder if I had had children with me.

I went to sleep on that thought. In the night I had dream of a soldier in a desert place. He went to one group of people and was welcomed by them. When he moved to a very different group he was also welcomed as if he were one of them. As I saw him walk alone down into a desert valley, I knew in my spirit that he was in danger, although I could not see what the danger was. It bothered me enough that I began praying in the spirit. My talking woke me up. The Holy Spirit said to me, "This is the kind of man that you will marry and the two of you will go out together." The dream surprised me. I pondered it and wrote in my journal.

In a few months I was on my way to Bethlehem alone to work with a team of totally new people. After a painful year or so there the Lord eventually sent me to work in Cairo.

Gradually I settled into life in Cairo. I had a good job teaching English at a university in the heart of the city. A Christian outreach team I was sent to work with was a big part of my life. The group was rather large and included several couples with children as well as several single people like myself. We met weekly for discussion and prayer and celebrated holidays and special occasions together.

### **Acquaintance and Guarding my Heart**

It was at a team member's June birthday party that I first met William. Keith and the other men were close to him because he often helped in the discipleship group for single men. In a prayer time after the party each person named a prayer request. William requested prayer for his August trip to Belgium to reach out to Arabic speaking people. I was thrilled because an Egyptian who could speak perfect Arabic had the heart and the motivation to go. So I prayed for him and that ministry.

After the prayer time he stepped up to me, took my hand, pulled it close to his heart, looked my eyes, and then turned to say in Arabic to others around, "Tell her thank you for that prayer!" Months later he told me that even though he could not understand the English words, the anointing he sensed in the prayer had impacted him.

His action caught me off guard. I thought, "This doesn't seem the cultural norm here. It will not be good for me if this handsome man keeps looking into my eyes like that!"

The others, especially the older ladies, laughed quietly. He moved away from me and my life went on as before. I didn't see or hear of him again until the team Christmas party.

As I glimpsed him walking in the hallway, I thought, "He will make someone a good husband."

Why not for me? Well, the Lord had been working on me for years to teach me not to husband hunt but to wait for Him to direct that matter. After all, I could not know the heart of a man like God does. Also He had spoken to me through a verse repeated three times in the Song of Songs:

*"I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the hinds of the field, that you stir not up nor awaken love until it please."*

The Spirit warned me not to allow romantic thoughts and feelings to work in my heart until God would release me to do so. I had been through some hard lessons learning to walk as I should in this command. Then, William is Egyptian and I am American. A long time ago I had decided that a cross-cultural marriage was not what I desired. Finally, there was a communication challenge. I had already said hello to him and talked about the weather. The only other subject I could handle in Arabic was buying fruit and vegetables. His English seemed to be non-existent or very weak.

### **Awakening**

Spring was coming to Egypt. One evening as I was alone washing the supper dishes, the Spirit whispered to me, "*Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come and the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land.*" I was pleasantly surprised and wondered what this meant.

Keith set his engagement party for February 14 and there William and I faced each other once again.

"Hello!"

"Hello"

"It's nice to see you again."

"Yes, it is nice to see you too again."

"Nice to see you."

“Yes, it is nice to see you!”

We drifted away each to talk to someone else in our native language. At the end of the evening he surprised me by inviting me to join a group going to visit his home in a few days’ time. I said, “Okay, if I can finish work early enough, I will come.”

The group waited for me at the metro stop and we went on to the southern terminus of Helwan. I was hungry and looking forward to a meal. My experience so far in Egypt was that every social event in a home was accompanied by lots of food. However, when we arrived at the home, we were directed up a couple flights of narrow stairs to two rooms that had been opened into one. It was filled with people sitting on simple wooden benches. It was a church meeting! William spoke to us through a translator that he was happy we were there and that he wanted each one of us to speak to the people.

“What shall I say? I don’t like speaking without being able to prepare beforehand,” I said to myself. Then I remembered my meditation from Luke chapter 1 that I had read that morning. So I shared how God blessed Zechariah and Elizabeth and chose them for a special assignment because they had been righteous all those years and walking in the commandments of God despite not having the children they desired. In hindsight we see that it was a very appropriate message for that time and place.

Unbeknownst to William or me, two ladies in the meeting saw me and thought, “That lady speaking is the one for William.” One of them was a lady he had worked with in children’s ministry. She took it on herself to invite me and my teammates to her home for dinner in two weeks’ time. In good Egyptian fashion we were invited to have a bit to eat with our hosts of that evening. However, my teammates were in a rush to leave. Indeed it was late and we had a long metro ride back home and I was still hungry!

The day of the dinner invitation arrived. It was March 16. My teammates were an older couple from Texas. She was not feeling the best, but we helped her on and off the metro. Once seated in the home of our Egyptian hosts, I began to wonder why I was there. None of the three of us could speak much Arabic. Our host had to do the translation for all of us. None of their four, young sons were there but William was, even though he wasn’t a member of their family.

There was a lovely meal this time. William and I were assigned seats next to each other at the table. William began to wonder, “Why is this lady here in Egypt? How old is she? Maybe 32?” He was 31.

Suddenly Dora, our hostess, inquired of me, “Carolyn, what do you think of marrying an Egyptian?”

What??? I was flabbergasted! I was about to say that I was not interested in a cross-cultural marriage or matchmaking. Before I could say anything Nelda, my Texan friend, spoke up firmly and clearly,

“Carolyn will do whatever the Lord tells her to do!”

There was nothing to add to that so I remained quiet.

Shortly Amin, our Egyptian host, took a new tact. "How old are you, Morgan?"

"I'm 65."

"How old are you, Nelda?" he continued.

"I'm also 65."

Then Amin and Dora announced their ages and I knew that all of this was to find out my age. Ah-hah! I would tell them exactly how old I was. The information would be like a grenade. It would stop all this matchmaking fast.

"How old are you, Carolyn?"

"I'm 41!"

Silence fell. Dora gathered dishes and brought the dessert. Soon my Texas friends hurriedly left. They had just discovered that their son back in Texas had eloped and they wanted to go pack up and return to America. Amin took them to the metro station in his little Volkswagen car. William was assigned to see me back to the metro station.

As we walked down the street, William worked harder at trying to employ some English he had learned in school. Being a language teacher, I was practiced at deciphering various strange forms of the language. Also I could speak simply and clearly. He asked me if I would like to see the Japanese gardens. He wanted to be neighborly and show me the local sights. I said yes thinking, "It's still mid afternoon and I will probably never be back in Helwan, so why not?"

Actually, as we walked and walked, talking with one another became more interesting than the gardens. William asked me, "Why aren't you married yet?"

I answered, "Because my heavenly Father hasn't arranged the marriage yet."

William's face sported a significant scar above and below his left eye. I wondered if he had been involved in criminal activity so I asked him, "How did you get that scar on your face?"

His answer surprised and impressed me. "One I love very much did that to me," he said without any trace of bitterness in his voice.

We left the gardens and walked toward Cairo. Finally he hailed a microbus and delivered me to my abode and left. There was something special about William. I couldn't put my finger on it exactly. God wanted something in the relationship between us, but what? Surely not marriage!?

The next day he called me. We agreed that we needed to talk so he came to my place. Not wanting to play around with each other's feelings, I went immediately to my question.

"What are you thinking about this relationship? Are you thinking of marriage?"

Rather taken aback he replied, "Maybe."



“Then, what is your goal in life?”

After a slight pause he answered, “I live for the Church of Jesus Christ.”

Those answers were better than I was expecting. He also had a question.

“If we were married, would you submit to me?”

My answer: “If you obey the Lord, I will submit to you. If you don’t obey Him, I will not obey you.”

Soon he left my place. We both had more than enough to think and pray about it.

That evening I visited my team leader and his wife and told them what had happened with William. I needed help. Finally Paul said, “I have been praying for William to get married.”

His wife Susan added, “And I have been praying that you, Carolyn, will get married.”

“Besides, you two will make a hot ministry team!” Paul added.

Brightly Susan interjected, “You can meet at our house and we will translate for you!”

“Wait!” I felt like shouting. This was not my idea of either romance or marriage. I felt like I was being pushed into something I didn’t want. William the person seemed very nice, but how much did I know about him really? What would his heart be like 5 or 15 years from now? What about the differences in age, language, culture, economic status, and nationality? What about God’s plan for my life?

The team leaders talked with William also. He asked if I was a submissive person or not. Paul affirmed that I was excellent in that area. It was arranged for us to meet at their home and for them to translate for us. William’s parents were not involved because they had both passed away many years ago. My parents were in Canada too far away and not in a spiritual position to be able to assess the matter. We agreed to fast and pray to know the will of God. Furthermore, we decided to ask my team leaders, Amin and Dora and another pastoral couple who knew William to fast and pray with us to know the mind of the Lord concerning our relationship. We would not marry unless all of them sensed God’s leading that way.

This was an exciting but also very frightening time in our lives. My contract at the university was finishing by early summer. Should I renew the contract or not? My sister’s wedding was coming in early July and I wanted to be in Canada for that event. I couldn’t run from the subject of marrying William. I lost weight considering what my life might be like married and living in Egypt. What if it locked me in a prison far from the things God had planned for my life? What about my family and my way of life?

### **William’s Struggle**

We met a couple other times to try to get to know each other. On one of those occasions William took me to drink tea on a boat floating on the Nile. He cried tears into his tea and was

caught up in emotion again as we walked away. He couldn't tell me why and I couldn't imagine. I wished that I could comfort him, but I was totally at a loss as to what to do or say. It would be six months later before I knew the reason. God was dealing with him.

Since November William had begun to hear a strange word in his spirit. "Leave!"

"Leave what?" he would ask. "My high-paying engineering job, which you gave me by miracles? My ministry of leading the little church in our home? The ministry with children I do in different parts of Egypt?"

In the ensuing silence he could only hear "Leave!" echoing in his heart. By late March there was greater insistence in the command and still no direction concerning the details. The hammering of the word in his heart brought the tears I saw.

Finally he cried, "Alright, Lord, whatever it is that you want me to leave, I will leave!"

William was born into a nominally Coptic Christian family. When he gave his life to the Lord in September 1972 on the day of his 14th birthday, it had been with tears also. As he walked alone down a dark street that night, God gave him a glimpse of the amazing plan He has for his life. He had seen hardly anything of those great things and wondered when he would.

Meanwhile, his mother, whose 7 years of intercession had brought her family to Christ, died only four months after he, his father and the other children were saved. About two years later in a family argument over a debt, his uncle led thugs to attack William and his three sisters and a cousin who were at home at the time. He heard his uncle say to the man who was attacking him with a knife, "Get his eye!" Outnumbered, they and the furniture were literally thrown out of the apartment. The family of 8 lived on the street for some weeks until his father started building a home in the southern suburb of Helwan. In those days William and his brother would argue over a brick to use for a pillow to sleep on. For many days William had a patch on his eye and didn't know if he would see again from it or not. When the bandage was removed, scars remained, but praise God, the eye was whole!

In a few months he had his final exams for the last year of high school. Amazingly, he passed and did well enough to be accepted in engineering college. His family struggled financially. Clothing and food were minimal. Bitterness toward his uncle festered. This added to William's struggles with his engineering studies. In his final year a friend asked William to help him study. The young man's father encouraged the idea by offering extra money for food and a nearby apartment. This was a miraculous provision of a quiet place to study and access to the books and equipment that William couldn't afford but desperately needed. They both passed that year - William with flying colors. That accomplishment was his father's special joy just a few months before he passed away.

At his father's death, the greatest weight of the challenges facing the family fell on William. Also he had to complete his required service of three years as an officer in the Egyptian army. It was not an easy time but it did provide food, clothes and some extra money for the family.

Gradually William was convicted that he must clean his heart of the terrible anger and bitterness seething there; otherwise, God showed him, he would never see the fulfillment of the vision and calling God had given him. William not only dealt with his own heart but led his siblings in doing

the same. They invited their uncle and the rest of the extended family, about 40 people, to their home in Helwan. They hosted and served them for a week restoring their relationship with them. William was set free from that snare of the devil!

Back in his university days William had his eye on a lovely neighbor girl. She and her family liked him and were eager for a wedding, but God clearly impressed on him that he had to break off it. It was painful, but he obeyed. Every now and then his sisters would make suggestions of potential brides but none caught his eye. His siblings recognized that William was an unusual man and wondered who would ever be a suitable mate for him.

The vision God had given William had not included anything about his marriage. Marrying an older, foreign lady wasn't part of William's dreams. As he thought about the possibility of marrying me, he said in his heart, "No, this won't work." But then it was as if the big hand of God pressed down on his head and he heard, "Don't say no!" As William conceded that perhaps he could marry this lady, the pressure lifted off and he felt encouraged.

### **The Breakthrough**

Meanwhile, I struggled with my fears and impatience. One evening as I was again washing dishes, I decided that was enough of this quandary. After fasting that day and then hearing that William still didn't have clear direction, I did not want to continue. Then the Spirit reminded me that He does not lead me in irritation or reaction but in peace, in a sense of rightness about a situation, in a word that He speaks to my heart. Rebuked, I knelt by my bed and opened my Bible. He directed to me to Philippians 2: 2-5.

*"Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus..."*

I highlighted the passage and in the margin noted the date: March 27, 1990. The quickened word quieted my soul. God convicted me of my impatience, self-centeredness and pride. He also showed me His desire for how I should relate to those with whom He was planting me. "Yes, Lord, I will wait and walk through this process with humility trusting in You."

Sometime in next few days I was ironing and singing Psalm 23. I shut off the tape player and sang heartily in the Spirit. God was there! Then I knew deep in my heart that, whether I married William or never married at all, His abundant grace would be more than sufficient for me. Peace, wonderful peace, flooded over me.

One night soon after that I awoke from sleep and sensed God was there. The question was blurted out, "What do you want me to do about William??"

"Yes!" the Voice shouted. I can't remember another time before or since when I sensed God speaking so loudly and forcefully to me.

I went back to sleep but was up again at dawn. Walking down the hallway I said to the Lord, "I feel that I am beginning to love William. Please take him out of my life so that I can get on with serving you." All the men I had previously thought about as potential husbands had all been at least a distraction from and sometimes a danger to God's plan for my life.

His answer again surprised me, "I want you to love him."

Late on the evening of April 3 William called me on the telephone saying, "Do you have your Bible?"

"Well, of course! Just let me pick it up."

"Read Isaiah 60:1-5."

I read aloud: *"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.*

*For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.*

*And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.*

*Lift up your eyes round about, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far, and your daughters shall be carried in the arms.*

*Then you shall see and be radiant, your heart shall thrill and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you."*

William spoke in simple English, "The Lord spoke to me through this after I thought about it for a long time tonight. He said that He wants His glory to be seen in His Church. After about another hour He told me, 'Carolyn is to be your church and you are to be like Christ to her'."

The words penetrated my heart. "Amen!" was my response. I knew it was the word of God. Suddenly I knew without any doubt that William was to be my husband. It was very precious to me that William spoke the word of the Lord to me and that he would marry me with this purpose before us. Our fears evaporated. Into our hearts God dropped love for each other and joy. The word that God made alive to us gave us a solid foundation for our marriage relationship, it gave us purpose together, and it empowered us to walk in it.

Actually the challenges of the time, the culture (in that dating was not a good testimony), and the language difference had all worked to our advantage because it forced us to not lean on our own thoughts or feelings but to whole-heartedly and passionately seek the will of God. In that situation we could hear Him clearly.

This alone would probably have been enough on which to marry but we had said that we needed to hear what the three couples said. Actually each one agreed that this step was from God. In fact, God gave Amin a prophetic word for us that confirmed the call of God on my life. I treasured that.

### **Shock Waves in Canada**

My parents had visited me in Egypt in early December 1989. It was a special time together. We talked about my sister's wedding coming in July. Naturally I did not mention William whom I had only seen once at a party several months before. Although I wrote to my parents weekly, I hadn't been able to inform them about the relationship under consideration because of my own turmoil. I didn't want to bring my parents into that turmoil when they could do so little to deal with it. Now that my heart was settled I wanted to tell them my good news in a phone call. I asked William to be with me for it at noon on April 6. The call itself was an event because it had

to be arranged through the university telephone central first. My father, the business man, had trained his children to be clear and to the point in phone calls. So I started, "Hello, Dad!"

He calls away from the phone speaker, "Susan, it's Carolyn!"

"Hello, Mom, are you there?"

"Yes"

"Are you both sitting down?"

"Yes."

"I've met a wonderful, wonderful man and I am engaged to married!"

Silence!! It is the only time I can ever remember my father being speechless. Eventually my mother choked out, "Congratulations!"

My father found his wits and his voice again. "Who is this man?"

"William Meawad Farag Guirguis. He is a mechanical engineer. Would you like to talk to him?"

"Yes."

William was wondering how he would talk to my father. What would he say when he found out that he did not yet have a place to live or have any savings toward that end? Reluctantly took the phone, "Hello!"

"How do you spell your name?"

"William - you know"

"No, the other name. What is it? How do you spell it?" Surely dad had paper and pen in hand to record this essential information.

William hemmed and hawed. Of course, he could spell his name in Arabic but at the moment he couldn't remember how Meawad or the rest of his name was spelled in English. So I said to him, "I've seen your passport. I remember how to spell it."

"Here! You talk to your father!"

So I carried the rest of the conversation. I spelled out William's name in full. I told them some about I came to the decision and the upcoming engagement party and the plans to be married in Cairo when my contract ended. Undoubtedly, this was quite shock for them. Thankfully, they handled it well. I think my joy and confidence buoyed them up. They also remembered that most of my decisions in life had been good ones, so they hoped for the best and chose to be supportive.

We proceeded to make arrangements to marry. There were health checks and various forms to be filled out for the Egyptian government, the church, and the American Embassy. I wanted us both to go home for my sister's wedding. Also I knew that I wanted William to get immigrant status in the USA rather than just a visitor's visa. That required that we present official marriage papers.

### **The Engagement**

Although I was rather oblivious to many Egyptian customs, my team leaders were not. They knew that my family should host an engagement party for me. Of course, my family in Canada were not able to do that, so my team leaders opened their home and garden for the event set for April 19. William asked through the interpretation of my team leader what kind of *shabka*, that is a marriage present, which is traditionally gold jewelry, that I wanted, as he knew that the *shabka* should be presented at the engagement party.

Gold did not interest me. A diamond ring did. I still had that from American culture but it was more than that. Once many years before when I had been praying about my marriage, the Spirit had told me that my marriage would be like a beautiful diamond. My diamond ring would be a symbol of that promise. Our trust wasn't in my love for William or in his love for me. Our trust was and still is in God who was directing us to marry so that His name could be glorified in us. He would be at work in us to accomplish His good plan. He who had begun to put His love in our hearts for each other would give us all we need to finish the course faithfully and to be beautiful for Him.

“Lord, you are more precious than silver.  
Lord, you are more costly than gold.  
Lord, you are more beautiful than diamonds,  
And nothing I desire compares with you!”

Numerous times I had sung this in ‘the great congregation’ in my home church...often with tears as I affirmed in my heart before God that He was far more important to me than the husband He had promised me and that I really did desire. In this marriage He was still the most important to me and I was enjoying this marriage as a gift from Him and for Him.

Yes, a diamond ring it is then. Where and how shall we get that in Cairo? I hadn't seen diamond rings of the type in my mind's eye in any shops that I happened past. The thought of looking at diamond rings had never ever entered William's mind. A friend advised him to go to a certain shop on the edge of the old bazaar called the Khan Al Khalili. We went together. I expected to see a fancy shop with a great display of diamond engagement rings. No, we went down a lane and found a shop less than 3 meters wide. No beautiful jewelry was displayed on the dusty counter. As my heart was sinking, I told myself to take courage. The man opened a safe and pulled out some folded newspaper. He unfolded it on the counter to reveal numerous diamonds. These, he said, he could make into a ring for us. We asked for a piece of paper and a pencil and then drew the design of the white gold rings that we wanted as an engagement ring and the other a matching wedding ring. I was surprised that I could make a design as easily as that. We prayed for the jeweler that he would be able to complete the rings in the five days remaining before the engagement party.

The next challenge for William was how to pay for the rings. Money that he earned in his engineering job had for years been spent on providing for his siblings and on ministry. He had no savings, no household goods, and no apartment of his own. Somehow I sensed William's financial situation. Some was apparent to me from seeing his family home. I had been earning more than I needed for my daily expenses, so for two years my savings account in Egypt had been growing. I had been waiting to know how God wanted me to use the money. With the expenses of the wedding coming up, I knew the money should be for that. I chose a private time and place to speak to William. I told him that my respect and love for him was based on his character and not on his worldly wealth or the size of his salary. Just because in those two years I had a higher paying job didn't mean that I was a better person in any way. Soon we were to become one. I wanted to make this money available for us to use toward any of the expenses. Some of it covered the cost of the two diamond rings and William's gold band.

William went to pick up the rings just before the party. The jeweler said, "I didn't know if I could have these ready by today. I have never before been able to make a ring in the way I made these. Everything went into place perfectly the first time I did it. They are beautiful. Some people said that I should keep them in the shop to show others but, of course, they are for you."

Some years later we had these two rings fused into one. The largest stone is in the center with six small stones curving above it and to the right on one side and another six in a matching curve toward the left below. To us the central diamond of our ring represents the beautiful diamond that God wants our marriage to be and the fruit that is to come from it. The six, small stones on either side represent William's hand and mine guarding our covenant relationship and our calling.

Wednesday April 18 I got up and dressed for teaching at the university that afternoon. William came that morning to escort me to the office in downtown Cairo where an Egyptian could officially marry a foreigner. This step had to be done before we could go to the US embassy to request an immigration visa based on his marriage to me. Then another signature was needed and time had run out so I just went back to work. As I got ready to sleep that night I mused, "I thought I would get married today but I didn't. Never imagined that my wedding would be like this!"

The next evening a string of colored lights welcomed us to the villa hosting our engagement party. I had found a long, deep red dress to wear and William's brother came to his rescue loaning him his white wedding suit. He was so handsome! There were about 40 people attending. It was a very diverse group including my team mates and my university coworkers. A few of them were Muslim. Amin and Dora were there along with William's brothers and sisters and an uncle's family. In fact, it was the uncle that had brought thugs to attack and take his family home, I discovered much later.

In preparation for the event I learned a chorus in Arabic, which William had taught me. After William and then I told how we had come to this decision, we sang this song together declaring it first to God and then to one another:

"For I am yours, and there will never be any other.  
For you any sacrifice is easy,  
For there is no one like you,  
who loves me with a heart of compassion."

The engagement party was rather like a wedding but at the end of evening he went to his home and I to mine. Somehow it felt odd.

### **Officially Married**

Being engaged, it was now culturally acceptable to be seen alone together in public. Friday we met and walked along the Nile. Soon a snack sounded good. We found ourselves sitting on a bench with a red juice and crackers. As we shared, we remembered the covenant the Lord Jesus made with us by His precious blood, by His atoning death and His resurrection. I promised William that I would give myself to supporting him to become all that God wants him to be. Likewise William promised me. It was a holy moment together there by the Nile River with the rush of the bustling, crowded city behind us.

On Saturday April 21 we acquired the last signature from my local police station and then went downtown to write the official marriage papers. His brother and his friend from work came along as witnesses. I was asked to have a seat in the dingy, crowded office. William came to inquire the name of my mother and her father. I gave the information and offered my father's name. He replied, "Oh, I don't need that. I know it." I sincerely wondered how he would know that. But the process continued. We moved into the office of the magistrate to sign the papers. William wanted his friend to take a picture and he managed one before the magistrate glumly made his disapproval evident.

The paperwork accomplished, we went to a local cafe. It was about 11 o'clock in the morning. William and his brother Nabil did not speak much English. His friend could do somewhat better. Even so I was only on the very edge of their conversation. I wondered if this meal was breakfast or lunch or what it was at such an hour. Then the food was served and I wondered what I was about to eat. It was all so strange and now I was officially married to this man and all the foreign aspects of his family and culture! Blessedly, the possible panic was swallowed up by "the peace of God which passes understanding".

### **Names**

Now that we had an official marriage paper, we could go to the US embassy to request an immigration visa. As I thought about helping William fill out the forms, I realized that he needed a family name and a middle name before we could proceed. So at the next opportunity to have a translated conversation with the help of my team leaders, I asked that we discuss our names. William thought that there were other more important topics.

"Names! Those are obvious!" he sputtered.

"Why didn't you need my father's name when you wrote the marriage papers?" I asked.

"Because I know your name, I know your father's name. It's clear."

"Really? What is my father's name?"

"Jean, of course."

"That's my name!"



“What? I thought your name is Carolyn!”

“It is. I have two names. My first name is Carolyn. My middle name is Jean. My family name is Jones.”

“Two names!”

“Yes. What did you write in the marriage papers?”

“Just like I wrote that I am William, son of Meawad, son of Farag, son of Guirguis, I wrote that you are Carolyn, daughter of Jean, son of Jones.”

“Oh no!”

“Then what is your father’s name?”

“Alfred Stoddard Jones”

“Oh!”

William thought that name was as strange and foreign as my father thought William's name was. It was quite a shock for both of us. What would my father, who takes great care in recording details of our genealogy, say if he knew what was written on my marriage papers? There was some comfort in knowing that he personally could not read the Arabic in the document. Even so what would we do about this discrepancy? It was decided that we would ask the translator of the document to make some little changes to make it closer to the truth.

The question of our names was still before us. I knew that Egyptian women did not change their names after marriage as we did in America. In some ways I was content to keep my name as it was. Even so, that was not the priority of the moment. William needed an official name for America which he could use there for the rest of his life. Finally we decided to keep it close to his Egyptian name. William Meawad Farag. Farag was chosen to be his family name because it was easier to write and say. It also has a beautiful meaning: a pleasant surprise after a long, difficult time.

### **Preparation for the Church Wedding**

Our days were full. We each had our professional job, our separate church meetings, our separate ministry responsibilities, and preparation for the the church wedding. Unlike most couples we were not preparing a place to live. We would go to America and Canada first. On the way, we decided to stop for five days in Amsterdam for a honeymoon. As soon as William’s US visa was in his passport, he went to the Dutch embassy to get another visa. He had to start standing in the long lines at dawn two or three times in order to finish the formalities there.

According to Egyptian custom, the groom’s family takes care of most of the wedding. That was mostly fine with me as I did not know my way around very well. I often accompanied William and others as we chose things that were needed. Moving around in the big city and dealing with taxi drivers was so much easier and pleasant with my fiancé. Even so we had learned that we were charged more if the taxi driver heard my English. It became our modus operandi for me to remain silent in a taxi.

The wedding dress, of course, I shopped for by myself. I found one and made the mistake of asking William to go with me to pick it up. He looked at the price tag and his face changed. The shopkeeper would not be bargained down. William was so angry because he could not imagine a dress being worth that much nor spending so much for a dress. For me the price was much less than I expected to pay for a wedding dress in Canada. We left the shop without the dress. We were both upset and sought out my team leaders to help us deal with the matter. It was explained to William that the dress is the full responsibility of the bride. He must just leave it to me. I was sent with my team leader's wife to find and buy a suitable dress of my choice.

On May 22 there was a private celebration of our marriage at the home of William's family. For some reason that is still a little vague to me, a different minister from the one at the coming church wedding needed to sign the official marriage papers for the evangelical church in Egypt. Whatever, it was a happy, pleasant time.

We did plan the church wedding ceremony together. One day when we were together I suddenly remembered a chorus I had not heard for many years and sang it to him. It was taken almost exactly from a portion of Psalm 132. William loved it. He asked me to sing it at our wedding. Although I do not consider myself a soloist, I decided to agree because I thought the groom I loved should have his desire at his wedding.

"By the way, when will be the wedding rehearsal?" I asked him.

"What's that?" he replied.

I explained as best I could. He responded:

"We don't have those here. You just go in and you come out married!"

Whatever might happen, I considered, between when I would walk in and then walk out, I believed that I would come out married and somehow it would be okay. Then we prayed together, "Lord, what is most important is that Your presence be with us. If You do not go up with us, we do not want to go."

### **The Church Wedding**

May 30, 1990. The big day had arrived! On the last possible day William was up at dawn to pick up his passport with the new visa from the Dutch embassy. I busied myself with packing the last of my belongings to empty the apartment in which I had been living. William stopped by briefly to drop off his suitcase so that I could bring it to the wedding along with mine. I did not go to a hairdresser. I took care of my short, dark hair and make-up in my own way. My flatmate had already left the country. As I put on the string of pearls that my parents had given me as a graduation gift from college, I thought of them. None of my family could be there because of the short notice and my sister's July wedding. I was alone until my team leaders arrived to take me in their car to the church.

As I entered the church and proceeded down the aisle I was filled with peace and joy. Deep in my heart I knew that I was living the fulfillment of God's promise to give me a husband. I was taking a major step forward in the purposes of God for my life. William and I would be together, no longer separated at the end of the day. A new adventure in God was about to unfold!

William, so handsome in his own new, navy-blue suit and dark red tie, was waiting for me at the front of the church. We walked up the steps to the platform passing a bevy of children in their Sunday best and sat in big chairs placed there for us. Behind us were two huge circular arrangements of white and red flowers with W written on one and C on the other. On William's left were his little nephew Bahaa and his friend Saied, and a young lady in a pastel pink dress holding a huge, lighted candle. On my right were William's little niece Engy, a young lady in a fancy dress, and another young lady also dressed in pastel pink and holding another huge, lighted candle. I had never seen these ladies before and have hardly ever seen them since. At least one of them is the sister of Fadia, William's sister-in-law. Soad, William's sister and who had arranged the children, chose her for that position because she had a beautiful dress!

The ceremony moved forward in an interesting mixture of English and Arabic, with some hymns, a solo, some preaching and then the vows spoken in English. After the minister prayed for us, we got up from our knees and went to the microphone. In Arabic William read the portion of Psalm 132 I that was about to sing. He explained that as we had found rest in each other, we would dedicate our lives to serving the Lord that He find rest in His Church. In English I gave a little explanation and then sang:

This is My rest for ever;  
Here will I dwell.  
For the Lord has chosen Zion,  
He has desired it as His habitation.  
He will abundantly bless her provisions.  
He will satisfy her poor with bread.  
He will clothe her priests with salvation  
And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.

Later we heard that people talked about this singing all the way home on the train. Regardless of how people responded, in hindsight we realize how significant and important this declaration was. The location in the heart of Cairo, Egypt and at the time of our public wedding vows were significant details. The declaration had been made in the Spirit. The spoken word established our direction and we still walk in it. We continue to see for ourselves and for those in our spiritual family His abundant provision, spiritual food for the hungry, daily salvation, and joyful shouts of praise. Hallelujah!

As we moved out of the church to drive to the reception, William asked my team leader to translate something to me. His reply, "You are on your own now!"

### **The Reception**

William and his family had chosen for us to have a reception at a fancy hotel near the pyramids. A troupe of young men with tambourines welcomed us. Some of William's family began to dance there on the street and even a tourist joined in. We moved on to dinner. There was an opportunity and an expectation for us to dance together. Although we made our best effort, it was obvious that we had hadn't practiced that.

About midnight some of his family and friends accompanied us to our hotel room upstairs. Suddenly I realized that I had forgotten William's suitcase at my apartment! William had nothing

to wear for the travel to America but the clothes he was wearing! As we reached the room, William swept me off my feet and carried me over the threshold. The crowd trooped in also and with a little trepidation I wondered how long they would stay. But they just peeked at the lovely room with rose petals strewn on the bed and a large floral arrangement sent there by my former coworkers at the university and left. Two of them went to my old place and brought the suitcase to us in the wee hours of the morning. God bless them!

### **The Departure**

Two nights were booked at the hotel and then we would fly out. The second night William's family and some friends came to visit us at the hotel. I should say that they came to talk with William and to look at me. Trapped behind the language barrier I could hardly converse with any one of them. Meanwhile William went off with one after another of them for private parting words. For me, those hours went by so slowly!

At breakfast on our balcony the next morning we drank in the awesome sight of the nearby pyramids. Soon we would be leaving the waters of the Nile for those of the Niagara River and instead of looking up at the pyramids we would be looking down into the depths of Niagara Falls. We read from Isaiah together and highlighted some verses that stood out to us. What God had done for me in Egypt was so amazing and wonderful. I felt like crying because I was leaving Egypt.

At the airport we checked in and walked to passport control. William began to look concerned and a bit anxious. I went through but William was stopped. He had not remembered to get written permission from the army to leave the country. As an officer he was required to be on standby duty for ten years after leaving the army. What should we do now?

"Why don't you go on without me," William told me.

"No, I won't leave without you!" Who goes on a honeymoon alone???

Now I started crying because I was NOT leaving Egypt. Furthermore, how would we get our luggage? What about our tickets? Where would we go?

Apparently we were an interesting scene. Soon a man came up and after greeting William by name asked about our problem. Since Fowzy worked at the airport, he knew exactly how to get back our luggage and our tickets. He did it for us. He had just finished his shift and offered to drive us into the city. Also he knew somebody working in a fancy hotel nearby, so we agreed for him to take us there. The hotel clerk, on finding that we were newly married and Christian, gave us a room for a deep discount. As Fowzy left, we implored him not to tell anyone where we were. I was not ready for more visitors.

Whether Fowzy spoke to anyone or not, we will never know. But there was a young man working in the laundry who discovered our presence. He came to our room several times in the next couple days asking if he could do any laundry for us. William was out running from office to office getting the necessary permit to leave. Meanwhile I worked on the telephone looking for two seats together on the first flight after the permit was in hand. There was an urgency to finish because of the cost of the hotel and because my parents were planning a celebration of our marriage in Canada on June 10.

William returned with the permit and a watermelon. He informed me that Amin and Dora were coming to see us in our hotel room. Taking them out to a restaurant was out of the question. I remember standing in the bathroom contemplating how to cut a watermelon with a pocket knife and how to serve it without plates. They came with their four sons and with Dora's younger sister Iman who was visiting from a distant city. Tarek from the laundry also came. Two years later when we returned to Egypt we learned that Tarek and Iman were married as a result of meeting that night in our hotel room.

The next day we flew to Amsterdam. The five-day honeymoon we planned there without family and friends was reduced to 24 hours so that we could take our originally ticketed flights onward. When we worked to navigate around our luggage in our tiny hotel room, we became thankful that we would have only one night there. The day was delightful - filled with special meals, a canal tour, and just being together. With herculean effort we got ourselves and our luggage on a bus headed to the airport. In those days luggage did not have wheels and we could not imagine spending money on a porter or a taxi.

### **Arrival in America**

After going through passport control in New York City, we were sent to the immigration office. We were sitting next to each other on a wooden bench. A voice called, "Mr. Farag. Mr. Farag!"

William showed no recognition as he had never before been called Mr. Farag, so I nudged his side gently and whispered to him, "William, that's you they are calling!"

Awake and alert now, he went with the man. Everything went smoothly. We left and caught our flight to Buffalo, New York. Less than an hour later as we came out the flight gate, Dad's camera flashed recording our big smiles. We were happy to see that he too had a big smile.

Soon we were in his car crossing the Niagara River and descending to Fort Erie in Canada. I delighted to see again the green parkway and neat gardens around the homes, and to imagine the fragrance of the spring flowers. William looked on the scene and cried out, "Where are the people? Where are the buses? Where is the garbage??"

### **Honeymoon in Canada**

Never did I want to have my honeymoon in Niagara Falls, even if they called it the Honeymoon Capital. I had grown up there. But we had no place of our own and I did want to see my family so there we were in my childhood home, which fortunately boasted five bedrooms. Thankfully we had one to ourselves. Carolyn Potucek, my best friend from college days and former coworker overseas, took another bedroom for about ten days. Members of my family were in the remaining ones as the family gathered to celebrate our marriage.

The first Sunday after we arrived we dressed again in our wedding clothes and at the regular morning service of my family's home church, we said our vows again. Afterward the family and a few of my friends from an area not too far away, came to the home and enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch that my mother had lovingly and capably prepared. It was another wonderful day.

My dear friend Carolyn had just been through a very difficult season and I wanted to have time to talk with her. I explained that to William and asked him to have patience with me if I focussed some attention on my friend during that first week when she would be with us. Her home was

very far from that of my parents. At the end of her visit after several walks and outings that we had with her and sometimes with my mother, she said, "I look forward to getting to know William some day when he can speak English."

Now it was William's turn to experience the lonely side of the language barrier. It was accentuated because he is by nature gregarious and the life of the party. He also suffered from culture shock. Apart from the month he spent in Belgium, he had never lived away from the culture in which he was raised. I had experienced this numerous times and knew how it felt, but that didn't mean that I could do much to ease the pain. I did say to him, "I know that you are a very good driver in Cairo, but please do not to drive for a while until you see how it is done here."

But my father, wanting to help William feel more assured in the new family and role, offered to let him drive. At least father was in the car with him. After all, William did not know his way around our town yet. As William sailed through the stop sign after the first sleepy block, my father had his own cross-cultural experience.

"What are you doing? That was a stop sign," Father yelled.

"Yes, but there aren't any other cars around!" was William's reply.

"In this country, you must stop whether there are other cars around or not."

They had a similar conversation when he turned right on a red light without stopping. Undaunted, my father, some weeks later, asked William to drive him to a doctor's appointment in Toronto. William had determined in his heart to do his most careful driving, but when they reached the downtown section of the big city, the city boy in William took over. He started weaving through the traffic as he would in Cairo. Father reclined all the way back in his seat, closed his eyes, and muttered, "If I am going to die, let me do so in peace!" Of course, William delivered him there and back home safe and sound with nary a scratch on the car.

My father used a car in another way to make life easier for William and myself. A couple mornings after our arrival he came to us at breakfast time. He said, "Your mother and I were not able to help you with your wedding in Cairo but we see that you will need a car here. We want to buy you any kind of new car that you would like."

Our jaws dropped open. I had always bought only a used car and only if I really needed one. William had never had car of own and had prayed that if God would give him a car, it would not be like any of his father's rattletraps that continually needed pushing and repair. The Toyota Camry station wagon that father had used to bring us from the airport had awed William.

Immediately William asked, "Can we get a car just like the one you have?"

"Yes!" my father replied with a smile.

We were both so amazed and excited! The following week the three of us went to a dealer in Buffalo and found a beautiful, brand new, powder blue Toyota Camry station wagon that became our very own. Wow!

Meeting and living with my family was quite an eye opener for William. In the evenings we would often sit and read in the living room. Every now and then someone might make a comment but then everyone went back to his book. To a Middle Easterner used to boisterous conversations and not used to reading much for pleasure this was very strange behavior. For lunch and dinner we ate together as a family. My family likes to converse at the table and to joke by using understatement in a relatively low tone of voice. It all went over his head. He tried to tell an Egyptian joke. They looked at him blankly and said, "What was that? What did he do?"

My father noticed his frustration and asked: "Why don't you laugh at my jokes?"

William answered, "You don't laugh at mine, either."

Dad suggested: "Let's agree that you laugh at my jokes and that I laugh at yours."

"It's a deal," William said, "but how will I know when to laugh?"

Dad gave him a signal with his finger. "When you see this, laugh. Okay?"

"Okay!"

So Dad told a joke. Seeing William's blank expression, he caught his eye, and gave him the signal. William slapped his thigh and doubled over in loud laughter as if he had heard the funniest joke of his lifetime. Then we all laughed and laughed. It wasn't long before we dispensed with telling the joke and just gave the signal....and laughed and laughed some more.

### **Move to Lima**

I wanted William to know my family and church friends, to learn English, to understand the culture from which I came. Also of course, William and I needed to know each other much better and to take time to seek the Lord concerning the details of our next steps. That would take some time, but I sensed that it would be an important foundation that should be laid before we returned to our life in Egypt.

We could not stay in Canada because, although my family members were now citizens there, I was still only an American citizen. We needed to live in the USA, so by the end of the July we went to Lima, a little village south of Rochester, New York to greet my friends there and to look for a place to live. Elim Bible Institute is in Lima. I had worked there for three years after my time in Kenya. The church there was the one from which I was sent and supported in prayer whenever I worked overseas. For me, it was important for William and the people in leadership there to have a good understanding of each other. Later over the next year or so we invited each of them, one by one, to have a meal with us.

We didn't plan to stay long in America so an inexpensive rental home was what we were looking for. A lightly used mobile home located in the village was for sale and we bought it. The problem came when we wanted to rent its lot in the mobile home park. The managers wanted to see that we had a good credit rating. We didn't, not because we had unpaid debts, but because we had never had any debts! William was from out of the country and I had never bought anything on credit. My father was the one who could help us. Bless his heart, he came

to Lima and talked to the bank manager. Right after that we had a new credit card and a signed rental agreement with the mobile home park beginning August 1.

Thank God for our spacious new car because that was what we needed to help us to find and transport household items to our mostly empty home. It was summer time and each weekend several people had a garage sale where they put used things for sale in front of their home. Using the announcements for garage sales from the "Penny Saver" newspaper, we hunted for the items needed to furnish our little home. Within a couple weeks we had our basics.

There was a little money left from the jobs we had left in Cairo, but we needed income. I taught English at a nearby college that summer. William found job hunting very difficult because of his challenge with English. But he did find a job assembling electrical circuits for fancy doll houses. His specialty was production planning. His employer paid him per piece based on the amount of time she needed to produce that piece. She trusted William with a key to the workshop and told him how much she expected of him each week. Soon William was able to produce the piece in a quarter of the expected time and so he had more time free for other things.

### **The Secret Comes to Light**

One day I took William to meet some of my college friends. On the way home he asked me why these people were so special to me. He saw that they were very Roman Catholic in their ways and he knew that I was certainly not like that. I told him, "That man's father prayed for me to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit." I went on telling him about that wonderful experience and how all I could say at first was "Hiyana! Hiyana! Hiyana!" and how great joy welled up increasingly inside me the more I said it. I became excited just telling the story again.

"Do you know what you are saying?" he asked me.

"I am speaking in tongues, of course!" I declared.

"That's Arabic! It's the way we say it in Cairo."

"Really? What does it mean then?"

"It means, 'He has given us life!'"

"Wow!" Then I remembered my dream about a soldier. "Where were you in January 1986? Were you in the army?"

"Let's see,...yes, I was in the army then."

"Were you in danger at that time?"

"Actually, I was in a lot of danger."

"What happened?" I wanted to know the details but it wasn't easy for William to describe them all to me at that time. Later the story unfolded.



William had been an officer in the Egyptian army and the only Christian in his section. On a personal level he was in danger because of pressures, temptations, and discouragement. In the army in 1986 he was responsible along with others in his section for the dispersment of old vehicles that had been auctioned off. More than once men came to him trying to buy favors. He refused.

One day his commanding officer brought him into his office. Speaking rudely to him, he accused him of taking bribes. William was taken out of his position, deprived of any pay, and made lower than regular soldiers. He could not defend himself. He was so upset and embarrassed that he decided not to tell anyone about it. At home, he wrote the day's date on the inside of his wardrobe door, saying, "Lord, if I am your son, deliver me! I want to write another date on this door: the day of your deliverance."

Some days of misery passed and then the same commanding officer brought him into his office again but this time he spoke very kindly and respectfully. He apologized for the mistake. William wanted to know what happened, but the officer would not tell him. Not long after that William finished his required time in the army and left with the highest recommendation possible. He wrote the date on his wardrobe door.

William called his sister in Cairo and asked her to look for and tell him the dates written inside the door of his wardrobe. Meanwhile I checked in my journal for the date of my dream. We discovered that the date of my dream was between the two dates inscribed in William's wardrobe! William was that soldier in danger that I had seen in the dream and had prayed for in January 1986! God had miraculously saved him and brought him through his trials.

Realization of what we had just discovered went off like fireworks within us. In 1970 when I asked God what work He wanted me to do, He gave me the answer in a word of Arabic which I could not understand at the time. The major work I was to do would be done in Egypt, but God chose not tell me all that in 1970 but to just give me the seed to speak and then a new step to take. I had to walk in obedience year by year in order to arrive in Egypt. Actually the previous steps were important also because of what God accomplished through each situation. But most of all we delighted in these two wonderful confirmations that, long before we ever even thought about marriage in any way, God had planned for us to be for each other and that together we would be for Him and His purposes in the earth. That thought comforted and encouraged us.

Yes, as it is written in Ephesians 2:8-10 *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God - not because of work, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which He prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."*

### **Saved by the Spirit**

In those days communication between us was still quite a challenge. Sometimes as I spoke, William would stop me ask the meaning of a certain word; for example, "temptation". I would pause and then say, "That is the first theme of Matthew chapter 4." He would show some understanding and we would go on with the conversation. So in that manner we used our knowledge of the Bible as a way to bridge the language gap.

Sometimes that didn't work. One Saturday in November we were to travel to Ohio for my cousin's wedding and go the next day to speak at a new church in another city. I was bustling around trying to get breakfast, prepare our bags, and pack a lunch. I was anxious to start driving. Looking up I saw William hunched over in a living room chair. He was still in his pajamas, unshaven, and with a very dark cloud over his expression. I was irritated because he wasn't helping me.

A bit sharply I asked him, "William, what's wrong?"

"Nothing!" he replied moodily.

Now I was angry because he was closed and doing nothing. I wanted to poke him with some sharp word. But what word would he understand? What would work? Suddenly I found myself speaking angrily in tongues, the language the Holy Spirit gives me. A few seconds later, to my surprise as well as William's, I marched into the living room, kicked in the air, and shouted, "Satan, get out of here! I hate you!"

William looked up and laughed. "You really did kick the devil. I saw animals that looked like black dogs run out of the place when you did that." Gone was the dark cloud of self-pity, fear, and anxiety about relating to my family and having to speak in English. Immediately William went and got ready to go.

The family wedding went very well. Even William had a pleasant time and saw that his fears of rejection were unfounded. At church the next day we stood to speak of how the Lord led us to marry. I spoke first and then William shared his part of the story. Since I knew the story, I helped a little with a word here and there. An anointing came over him and he began to speak much more fluently and boldly in English. Not only that but the word was finding its mark in the hearts of the listeners. Many came forward for prayer after we finished. Then the pastor asked all the young men to meet with William afterward and all the young women to meet with me. About mid afternoon they took us out for a lovely dinner. They sent us on our way with a check for \$500! Neither of us had ever been given such a generous offering! Our joy and amazement buoyed us up until we arrived back in Lima near midnight.

A shock awaited William at work the next morning: he was no longer needed there. He had worked himself out of a job by producing more electric circuits for the doll houses than his employer could use. If we hadn't received the gift from the church the previous day, we would have been in financial straits.

Really, as we thought about it, Satan had not wanted us to take that trip to Ohio but to fight each other. What if I had let loose my tongue in complaint and accusation and judgment? No matter what language I used, he would have discerned the spirit in which I spoke. What if, in his moment of weakness, he had answered me likewise in a wrong spirit? What if we had fought and had never gone or perhaps worse, if we had gone and spewed out our negative talk and attitudes on the people we met? We would have had problems with each other, problems with my family, problems because we didn't keep our word to be at the church, problems with William's English because he had never received his breakthrough, problems financially, and worst of all - problems because we would have been far from God's plan and the peace of His presence.

How I thank God for training me to pray in the spirit daily. In the time of trouble I found myself readily speaking in tongues. He turned my fleshly, judgmental anger against my husband to anger against the devil, the one instigating the problem. God put the word of authority in my mouth to stop the work of the enemy. Wonderful Holy Spirit! Wonderful grace!

### **Have Car, Will Travel**

With the loss of William's job and the encouragement of what happened in the Ohio church, we sensed that it was time to start making arrangements for returning to Egypt. Our church elders supported the plan. They asked us to start visiting churches with the aim of garnering support for our ministry in Egypt.

Since we were to be working with my original team, we needed to go to their office base in California. We didn't have much money for travel but we did have a beautiful, dependable car. So off we went visiting old friends and plenty of new ones. In a little over a year's time we traveled thousands of miles and stayed in many different homes. We aimed to be blessing to those we visited using our testimony, giving a word we sensed from the Lord for them, and once in a while helping financially when so led. For indeed, we must sow, before we can expect to reap.

Hours driving in the car gave us opportunity to talk. It was a special time we shared together. Also I learned that when William was driving and therefore forced to listen, I could give him English lessons, if I could give the point within one to two minutes.

### **The Return**

Just as William was starting to be comfortable and enjoy life in America, the time came to leave. One day in mid March 1992 I sensed an urgency from the Holy Spirit to return to Egypt as soon as possible. Although there was still a certain goal to reach, William and the church leaders agreed that we should go. We put our mobile home up for sale. When it still hadn't sold, we left it with a friend to sell. We sold or gave away most of our things. My brother bought our beautiful car, which now had 57,000 miles on it. (It was too nice to drive on the crowded streets of Cairo.) We bought and packed what we could take on the plane for life in Egypt and flew away on April 24.

April 25, 1992 is the date we established our home in Egypt, at least our tax home according to US tax laws. Also some significant dates were coming right up in Egypt of which we were not aware until William went to see his family in Helwan that day after we arrived. They handed him letters that had come to him.

He opened the first and found that the army had called him up for service during the Gulf War that started in August 1990. Since he had not appeared, they were now summoning him to court - the very next day! At the courtroom he showed them his passport with the permission to leave the country and his date of re-entry. He was given a reprieve.

The next letter was from the bureau of taxation. William had left his job with an unpaid vacation, not a full termination process that would prove that all his taxes were paid. Now he had to prove that all his taxes had been paid or face prosecution! The court appointment was for the

following day. Again William was able to show his passport and to take care of the problem easily.

If we had arrived after these court cases, he might have been arrested at the airport upon arrival! What would I have done hardly knowing any Arabic, much less the procedures required? Obedience to the gracious prompting of the Holy Spirit had spared us that! Our leaving Egypt in June 1990 had spared William serving in the Gulf War! That too must have been part of God's plan.

Indeed, God had brought us together and preserved us because, in His great mercy, He loves us and chose us to do some special things with Him, especially in Egypt. With thankfulness to God and with love for each other that has deepened over the years, we continue to do just that.