

The Young Calvinist - 1970

## HOW'S YOUR IMAGINATION?

By Shirley W. Madany

Can you imagine that you were born in Bahrain on the Persian Gulf, and that you grew up there in a Moslem-Arab family? You finished your high school and then left home to study on scholarship in the U.S.S.R. You find yourself in the large city of Kiev (1,292,000) in the Ukraine. You own a good radio and spend some time each day searching the air waves. The broadcasts from Trans World Radio in Monte-Carlo come in clearly and they have a foreign language section. Naturally, the language you are hunting for is Arabic. Then one night you discover the Arab block--the language of your heart.

It is the classical Arabic that the sheik uses but what is being said is not like anything you have heard before. What is this Saatu-l-Islah which is so concerned with man and his relationship to God? And those words from the Holy Bible. They really touch your heart. You discover that lots of the other Arab students are listening to this program. Finally you decide to write to that address in the Sudan and ask for some of those publications which are being offered. Imagine how surprised you would be when the answer to that letter comes from Chicago, U.S.A.!

The ways of God are mysterious. Who would believe that a Moslem studying in a communist country would become interested in the Christian gospel?

Can you imagine a Roman Catholic Syrian studying medicine at the University of Valencia, Spain? In Syria he belonged to a minority group, but now he is disillusioned by what he sees and experiences in this Roman Catholic country. There are thousands of Arab students in Valencia. He, too, discovers the Saatu-l-Islah and eventually enters into a correspondence as he finds the concern and earnestness in this program which he expected from fellow Christians.

Would it fire your imagination if you could look over a stack of index cards with addresses like: Casablanca, Morocco; Bordj Elmessaudi, Tunisia; or Bordj Akhriss, Algeria? The word "Bordj" means castle. Doesn't that make you think of the French Foreign Legion?

Do you have a map of the world or a globe handy? Look at some of these places and consider the distances involved as letters written from cities, villages, and oases are sent off to that one familiar address in Khartoum, Sudan where they are airmailed to The Back-to-God Hour in Chicago.

Perhaps it's easy to picture an American abroad--studying in Rome, Paris, or Amsterdam, serving in the Peace Corps in Africa, or with the army in Europe or Turkey. One can list any number of such possibilities. But would you have believed, looking at the map again, that anyone in a wide area from North Africa to Iraq to Finland, is in good listening range of Monte-Carlo on the Mediterranean and its Arabic and English broadcasts of the Back-to-God Hour?

If you have never been outside the United States it will be harder for you to understand just how important radio is. Then English would be the language of your heart and you would be searching the air waves in the same way that a boy from Bahrain or Aleppo would hunt for Arabic.

Suppose you speak only Spanish, what then? Then you would be able to hear the gospel preached when you tuned in on La Hora de la Reforma. It wouldn't matter where you lived in all of South America.

Spin the globe and think about all the millions of people who speak Spanish, Arabic or English. In Rev. 5:9 we read ". . . (Thou) hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of *every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*" Will God use this means of radio to call unto Himself the saints who are mentioned here?

Now you are beginning to get the idea. How about French, you say? Is there anything going in French or German or Dutch? Well, if you live in Quebec, Canada or in the West Indies there certainly is. You can tune in on an excellent series of French programs.

Sit back a minute and ask yourself the question: who is doing all this? How did it happen? Is this our church, behind an international scheme, for the glory of God? It does stretch the imagination, doesn't it? The Back-to-God Hour isn't just that extra sermon on Sunday, take it or leave it. It is a rapidly expanding means of reaching people all over the world, people who don't have the privileges you do of attending church twice on Sunday and hearing the true gospel.

I can speak from personal experience about the impact of radio. We began our married life in Latakia, Syria and I can remember vividly many of the programs which we heard on the BBC from Cyprus. That is when we began to dream of reaching the Arab world by radio, for the doors of the conventional type of missions work were closing rapidly. One political "coup" after another drew Syria closer to the ideology of communism.

Now we can praise God for almost 7,000 Arabic-speaking listeners on our files, the mere tip of an iceberg, for there are always a much larger percentage who listen but don't or cannot write. As the packets of letters arrive from Khartoum, we continue to marvel at the way in which God touches one here and one there. The trend has been a great increase in mail from the Moslems of North Africa and from students all over Europe.

The next time that you hear of your church's radio work, please set your imagination to work. Pray for more and more response to this call for repentance and faith in the Lord

Jesus Christ. Over and over these listeners express their gratitude. They are praying for you.

If you are interested in finding out more, the Back-to-God Hour 10858 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60628, welcomes visitors. They will also supply you with a station log which will give you a better idea of the overall scope, which includes Indonesia, and new daily broadcasts in English, Portuguese, and Spanish from the most powerful short-wave station in the world, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles.