

Reaching Muslims for Christ

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The Struggle for the Heart  
of the Middle East

Rare 1927 Photo of Jerusalem by Ralph Freed



Insight Publishing

FREED

**RALPH FREED**

FOREWORD BY PAUL DAVID FREED





Dr. Ralph Freed (standing)  
First Crossing the Jordan River, 1926

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of the Middle East

**Ralph Freed**

**Foreword by Paul David Freed**

60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Special Edition

Insight Publishing

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by Ralph Fried (Freed)

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# My Father

When thinking of my father, there is one picture that stands out in my memory more than any other. It is one repeated many times over of him sitting in a small mud-lined stone room in an Arab village. Crowded tightly around him would be the men of the village, with the women in the far recesses of the dingy dark room. In the center is a fire with smoke filling the air. On the fire is a little coffeepot with some of the thick sweet syrup type coffee. It will be passed around in a single small cup to be sipped by all as a symbol of welcome to the visitors. Soon he will be speaking to these cold, hardened hearts.

The deep furrowed rugged faces, not too clearly visible through the dingy smoke-filled room, will depict the hardness of heart and callousness of a sin-ravaged people. The words will flow with virtually no foreign accent. They will come with the combination of a real knowledge of these people and of what the Lord Jesus Christ can do for them. At some point, it may be in hours, it may be days, or even years, many of those hard faces and even harder hearts will show a miraculous change from death unto life.

To see as a boy the power of the Gospel later written on these faces, and more importantly manifested in their lives, is something I will never forget. To me this was “Reaching Arabs for Christ.”

Behind the scenes is the everyday life of a godly man who knows and lives Christ as few do. His total life has been one of honoring the Lord Jesus and making Him known. As his son, I have known him down through the years as few can know him. Truly his has been a life totally and completely dedicated not only to “Reaching Arabs for Christ,” but so many, many others as well.

— Dr. Paul Ernest Freed  
Founder – Trans World Radio

# My Father's Father

Every grandchild sits on their grandfather's knee and wonders at the face that is his father's father. Only years later can he begin to understand the magnitude of who held him years before. And so now as a grown man, it is my great honor to reflect briefly on the life of my precious grandparents — Mildred Freed, who tithed her life in prayer (two and a half hours daily) in the corner of a missionary hut on the border of Arabia, and Ralph Freed, who pioneered the earliest roots of the modern evangelical Christian awakening in the Middle East.

Scripture says “Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me” (Psalm 16:6). How manifold is that truth in pondering the selfless and humble stories that will shortly unfold before the readers' eyes. From the burning wastelands of Dera'a, Syria, through the leper outposts of Lebanon and into the bustle of the war-wrought Holy City of Jerusalem, their lives breathe, cry and struggle for the heart of the Muslim people.

Having known their burden as a boy, and now seeing the critical world-wide implications of their spent lives, what meaning, what tutorials they send to us. Numerous churches flourish and untold thousands have been affected by what they started. Today, more than ever, it is essential that Christians reach the sons of Ishmael with compassion, love and insight. May we all learn from these spiritual giants how to Reach Muslims for Christ.

Though he spoke nine languages fluently the primary dialect he knew was the gentle whisper of God reaching to a lost and dying world. His identification with the hopeless, his nurturing of the faintest glimmer of possible faith ring to each of us: belief in the Lord for the impossible. Grandfather, Grandmother, I will see you soon, but for now we've seen your fruit and desire to walk in your courage and devotion.

— Dr. Paul David Freed  
Founder – Mighty Men of God

# Chapter 1

## **Waters in the Wilderness**

(Isaiah 43:20)



Arab Shepherd Boy with Camel Hair Sling,  
Bethlehem 1927

We were traveling through “no man’s land,” an arid, barren country at the junction of Northern Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. There was only dirt and stone with no trace of vegetation as far as one could see — and that was not very far at times because of the cloud of dust which literally enveloped our car as it made its way slowly on the rugged trail.

After miles of travel without seeing a human being, we suddenly passed an Arab shepherd boy leading his flock of sheep. We went quite a distance past them when the thought struck us that the presence of the shepherd boy undoubtedly indicated that there must be water not too far away. We turned around. By the time we reached the shepherd, another thought was going through my mind and I immediately shared it with Mr. Brooks, my missionary companion. “We must be near the source of the Jordan, perhaps within walking distance,” I said.

We inquired from the Arab boy about water and he led us to a very small brook, a mere crack in the ground, with a bare trickle of water winding its way like a ribbon through the open field. We were disappointed. The shepherd boy, noticing our wondering expression, said, “Much, much water over there,” and pointed to a black spot in the far distance. His trained eyes could easily see it, though it took us a while before we detected it. We knew that such a spot indicated either a Bedouin encampment with its black goat-hair tents, or an oasis with its green vegetation which appears black from a distance. “Much, much water...” gave us encouragement that it might be what we were looking for.

After a long wearisome walk through stony fields, we reached our objective and stood gazing with fascination at a large cluster of lovely trees. There was a grove which covered an acre. Unless you have been in desert country, you cannot appreciate, as we do in the Middle East, what trees mean in the midst of barrenness.

There is something delightful and exhilarating about them. The contrast makes us value them the way we never do where vegetation is plentiful.

In the direction from which we came we saw no sign of water, and this made the presence of the trees rather mysterious. We pierced through the outer rows of trees and to our surprise we saw that the grove surrounded a large pool of water. “A pool of water!” we both exclaimed in astonishment, for we saw no trace of a spring anywhere. But as we looked at the pool, we discovered that there were bubbles all over the surface of it. On closer observation we noticed that the water was bubbling and stirring the way it boils in a kettle. Then we understood. It sprang from an underground source, and the source itself was swallowed up in the pool it had formed. On the other end of the pear-shaped pool we saw the outlet — a crystal-clear stream flowing southward.

Now we looked to the north, and above the tree tops we saw in the far distance — nearly a hundred miles away — snow-capped Mount Hermon towering above all the other ranges. Then the secret and the wonder of it all fully unfolded to our hearts and minds. The perennial snows of Mount Hermon melted and disappeared underground; then, far away, in the midst of barren desolation and depressing heat, this hidden stream broke forth, bringing life in its wake.

\* \* \*

What a picture this is of the spiritual history of the Holy Land! It depicts the Gospel sent down from heaven, then disappearing in the centuries of desert darkness and finally breaking forth anew in our day.

The average Christian, when thinking of Palestine and the Middle East, readily recalls the shining forth of the glorious light of the Gospel with the coming of Christ, and is familiar with the marvelous and rapid flow of the streams of salvation as recorded in the book of Acts.

Comparatively few Christians realize, however, that the ancient Bible lands, which at the close of the first century of the Christian era had scores of churches and tens of thousands of born-again believers, have become with the passing of centuries spiritually parched. Today the Middle East is one of the neediest mission fields of the world.

The next chapter will relate what happened to Christianity in Bible lands in the course of the centuries from the end of recorded Bible history till our day, and how the Gospel light turned to awful darkness and the streams of salvation to spiritual barrenness and desolation.