Jenny Eugenia de Mayer 1865-1947

Servant of God in Turkestan and Arabia



She was born in Russia into an aristocratic family of German origin. She was the second child of an official of the Russian Imperial State Council – Dr. C de Mayer. Her connections at the Russian Imperial Court were greatly used of the Lord all through her life to facilitate the work to which God had called her.

Her parents were believers. Her father had been led to faith in Christ by his piano teacher. Her grandmother was a very devout believer. The well-known revivalist Johannes Gossner (1773-1850) stayed in her home when he visited St. Petersburg 1820-1824.

In the late 19th century a significant spiritual movement took place among Russian aristocracy through the preaching mission of Lord Radstock of England to the Russian Empire in 1874. His family name was Granville Waldegrave. He was born in 1833 and died in 1913. Although he was a wealthy English Lord he dressed simply to avoid undue deference. He lived in a modest apartment to cut expenses and gave up shooting as it distracted him from Christ's work. He went hungry to have more money to give away. He gave considerable funds to Hudson Taylor and to other mission works. He led a revival among Russia's French-speaking aristocrats. Several Counts came to the Lord and were then barred from Russia. In 1858 he married Susan, daughter of John Hales Calcraft M.P. of Rempstone, Dorset.

Lord Radstock was important in the growth of a mission vision in the group in St. Petersburg. After his initial trip in 1974, he went again three times – 1875, 1876 and 1878. The following report of him appeared in the British Weekly: **"Lord Radstock was no fanatic. He was a man of high cultivation and many accomplishments. He could adapt himself to any society and taught brightly about many subjects. Yet somehow one felt instinctively all the time that he was waiting for his chance of speaking the truth that had saved him and would save others."**

Three thoughts marked his life:

1. The free grace of God
2. The mystic union between Christ and His church
3. The universality of man's need and the suitability of Christ to meet that need in all its claims both East and West

Back in 1866 he had given up command of the West Middlesex Volunteers to concentrate on Gospel ministry. He held meetings that year in Weston-Super-Mare in England. There was an amazing move of the Holy Spirit and hundreds gave their lives to Christ. Among them was a German – Dr Fredrick William Baedeker. He received a call from God to leave his home and take the Gospel to Russian Turkestan. This he did despite the fact that he was born with a curvature of the spine and he only had one lung. For the remaining 32 years of his life he took Bibles in many languages all over Central Asia. He was able to preach hope to many in the Island prison of Sakhalin.

The outpouring of the Spirit that was breaking out in England caused many of those affected to move out to other parts of Europe and beyond. In 1867 a Liverpool lawyer called Reginald Radcliffe went to preach in Paris even though such activities were strictly forbidden. He held meetings for 6 weeks and when he left a leading banker organised 13 groups for reading and prayer in different parts of Paris. These were lights shining in a dark place for 4 years till the Commune. Lord Radstock was a leading light in one of these groups that met in a tiny church in Rue Roquépine. Many from the Russian aristocracy became interested in the Gospel. Two princesses attended this meeting where they both found peace in Christ. They became links to what was happening in Russia.

A Russian diplomat urged Lord Radstock to meet the Grand Duchess who was in Paris. She refused the meeting but God brought it about in an amazing way. This encounter resulted in her believing in Jesus. When she returned home she spoke to many in her world of what she had heard in Paris and from that point the work in Russia began. She invited Lord Radstock to visit St Petersburg. Should he accept? His great principle of guidance has always been to examine the motive influencing him. Fear of suffering could never be a God-given reason for not acting. He would accept!

For ten years Lord Radstock had been seeking an opening to Russia. Fearing the way was closed to him, he had begun to prepare his eldest daughter for the task. His comment now was, **"Never push a door ajar! God says, 'I have set before you an open door!' This will be so when He means us to go through it. Sometimes He lets our faith be tried by doors ajar that we may wait and see if He means them to be opened to us."**

When he arrived he found a group of the Duchess' friends and relatives gathered to meet him. It is interesting to note that the Gospel preaching that had so touched the Russian visitors to France didn't appear to have touched the French upper-classes. Lord Radstock's meetings in 1874 had a profound effect on a Colonel of the Imperial Guard and one of the wealthiest members of the aristocracy – Vasiliy Aleksandrovich Pashkov (1831-1902). He dedicated his life to Christ and when Radstock left Russia he assumed leadership of this new movement that was expanding across the rigid social divides influencing both peasants and princes. The expansion was also geographic from St. Petersburg to Sakhalin Island in the Far East. Pashkov's high social position and possessions in the Ural Mountains and Central Russia afforded many opportunities to spread the Gospel widely.

This move of the Spirit of God continued to affect the de Mayer family. It is reported that they all sang Moody and Sankey songs in Russian! Jenny first studied music/singing/painting in St. Petersburg. Later she did medical studies in Berlin and Lausanne. She completed the course but didn't sit the exam. She worked for a while in Paris in the laboratory of Sorbonne University.

While in Roscoff on the coast of Brittany she had what she referred to as a "miraculous conversion". The truths that had been so evident in her family and that she had accepted intellectually, took on a new depth of reality. She soon determined to go into the service of mission. She set out for Armenia. She travelled to Istanbul but fell sick and had to return to Switzerland. It was there she experienced for the first time something that would become a kingpin in her life and on which she would depend in her faith and service. She heard a voice in her innermost being that she knew without a doubt was the voice of God. She asked God, **"What should I do with the new life You have given me?"** She heard the words, **"I will send you to criminals in Siberia"**. It was hard to contemplate such a task, but she knew she must obey. It is worth noting that she didn't consider this the only way to receive divine instruction. She knew it must be confirmed through God's Word and the counsel of brothers and sisters. Still when God has spoken we must obey.

Jenny began to think about Sakhalin – the island of exiles and deportees off the coast of Siberia. But how could she live there alone? On her return to St. Petersburg she decided to join the **"Sisterhood of St. Eugenie"** – a subdivision of the Russian Red Cross. She wore their uniform and she completed a course as a doctor's assistant so she could give medical help. The way to Sakhalin opened to her in October 1899 when the first home for the children of deportees was built there. She was matron of the home of 69 children of whom 67 were illegitimate – born in women's prisons along the infamous route, 5,000 miles long, across Siberia along which the columns of those deported slowly pushed their way to Sakhalin Island where many were to spend the rest of their lives. Fifty per cent were criminals and fifty per cent had some physical disability. Later she established a working home for those who had been released so they could earn a modest income to live.

The Russo-Japanese war 1904-5 ended in Russian defeat and the ceding of the island of Sakhalin to Japan. This brought Jenny's work to a close. A major new work opened up in the Moscow slums – an orphanage and a home for vulnerable street girls. She had occasion to visit England and heard the challenge concerning the Muslims of the world given by Samuel Zwemer at the Baslow Student

Conference. Just as before in her call to Sakhalin, she now felt deep in her soul the urge to reach out to the millions of Muslims in Russia and Central Asia.

Russian Turkistan extended from the Caspian Sea to the western borders of China. The southern border skirted northern Persia, Afghanistan, Kafiristan (present day Nuristan) and Kashgar. At this time the Emirates of Bukhara and Khiva were domestically independent but under Russian protection. From 1865 to 1885 the whole of this part of Central Asia was incorporated into the Russian Empire. The population of Muslims was 8-10 million. They were guaranteed complete freedom of religion. Evangelism among them was forbidden.

In 1812 Tsar Alexander I had allowed the British and Foreign Bible Society freedom to open branches in some of the most remote corners of the Empire. Sometimes there was extreme opposition from the Orthodox. But the result was that the Bible in Russian and in many languages of the Empire continued to be produced and distributed until the Bolsheviks came to power. Most of the population of the Russian Empire were peasants – still the Gospel penetrated into every level of society.

In the summer of 1909 Jenny travelled for six weeks as an independent Bible messenger. She was never part of any church or society. Her goal was to distribute as many Scriptures as possible in the languages of the people of the region. The British and Foreign Bible Society in Moscow supplied her with the literature. In the autumn of 1909 Samuel Zwemer invited her to present a report on Islam in Russia to a World Mission Conference in India.

In 1910 she wrote, **"This year I began my work as a real Bible colporteur in Uzbekistan – Tashkent and the Emirate of Bukhara. Two factors helped me to be free to sow the 'good seed'. Firstly, I was independent of any Russian or foreign Bible Society – completely independent and travelling at my own expense. Secondly, I was fortunate to have influential people in St. Petersburg who believed in my work and so officials did not oppose me."**

Her first stop was Bukhara. The Emir, Alim Khan, had a castle and there were large mosques. She visited the Russian consul and presented her letter of authorisation from the Governor of Moscow. It applied to the whole of the Russian Empire and allowed Scripture distribution in any language. She always wore the respectable uniform of the Russian Red Cross. This went a long way to overcoming mistrust and opened the doors to people's hearts. She said, **"It was one of my proven tactics to enter the enemy's camp!"**

From Bukhara she went with a hired driver by horse and cart through a bleak desert to Karshi south west of Samarkand. She stayed in a 'caravanseray' (a reasonable travellers' lodging). Each day she went in the streets and coffee houses giving away Scriptures. This created great interest. They had never before seen anything like it – a strange white woman alone, without a man, distributing writings.
As she gave the booklets away Jenny prayed that God would get them into the right hands. She later wrote, **"The burden of my heart was not fear for my safety as I ventured alone into this town aware that my voice would be the first to name the name of the Lord Jesus. No, it was the responsibility of understanding just what God's will was in sending me to that town and to be led to the right men to whom His message and His call was meant to be delivered."**

Reactions were mixed. Some stared at her with hostile coal black eyes but still seemed eager to have a booklet. She recounts the case of a young man who asked, "Is this the Injil – the true Injil?" She replied that there was only one Gospel. Pressing it to his mouth and forehead he said, "I have longed to know what is in this book."

Many asked about the results of her work. She replied, **"No visible, tangible results, but one thing is clear. God's will has been done."**

Her next stop was Samarkand. Again Scriptures were received eagerly. She says that her stay was, "Blessed and encouraging". At the end of the second week the inner voice of the Holy Spirit, that she was learning to recognise more and more, impressed on her that she should go to Patta Hissar. She didn't know where this was. She had only heard the name once before and she knew nothing about it. But she had been trained by God's Spirit to obey such promptings. She asked at the Post Office and she learned that it was a small frontier garrison in south Bukhara on the River Amou-Daya very close to Afghanistan.

She wanted to know for sure if this was really the Holy Spirit or her own imaginings. She stayed a few more days to check. Being assured it was the Holy Spirit and that in good time she would know the "why", she set out. These garrisons were positioned about 50 km apart and so she travelled from garrison to garrison for about six days eventually arriving at Patta Hissar. It was a very small place. The Russian section had clean streets, nice bungalows and shady gardens. In the 'native' part there were small bazaars and a number of Afghans as well as a few Jews.

Tired as she was she couldn't rest because of an inner urge that whatever she had to do must be done quickly. She distributed all her Yiddish literature to the Jewish traders. The Afghan travellers were suspicious, but on seeing Gospel portions in Pushtu they took them eagerly. So these Scriptures would travel into the closed land of Afghanistan. She returned to her lodgings with an empty basket asking God for guidance what to do now. She heard a shrill whistle and was told that the weekly steamer had arrived and would be leaving in two hours. This was the only way for her to leave other than the way she had come. She bought a ticket to Tchardjui – a small town on the Amou-Daya. A railroad passed through it crossing Turkistan west to east. While waiting to board the steamer she saw a group of about 20 people looking very frail and worn standing in the sun. Who were they? Using the status of her Red Cross uniform she prevailed on the captain to let them board the ship and sit in the shade. She later learned that they were Hajjis from Mecca. At that moment, in her spirit, she sensed God's call to reach the Muslims of Central Asia not just by the printed page or the spoken word but also by deeds of mercy.

In the spring of 1912 she applied as doctor's aid on a pilgrim ship of the Russian Volunteer Fleet. She didn't receive an answer and so she continued her travels through Turkistan. She received an urgent call from her family to return to Moscow to help her nephew over the winter. She packed just warm clothes but that inner voice she knew so well prompted her to put in some lighter weight clothing. She thought it was ridiculous for a Moscow winter, but she packed some anyway. On arrival in Moscow she found out she was not needed to help her nephew. She wrote, **"I remember that I accepted this unpleasant situation with the inward assurance to be shown by and by what my Lord meant by these strange leadings".**

Two days later, while she was shopping, she sensed a sudden urge to call a lady-in-waiting to the Dowager Empress who was also President of the Sisters of Eugenie. On hearing her voice the lady exclaimed, **"How is this possible! You in Moscow! I telegraphed you at the far end of Turkistan only yesterday that you were accepted by the Volunteer Fleet as a Sister of Mercy and doctor's aid on the pilgrim ship 'Jerusalem'. I knew it was almost impossible for you to get to Odessa in time as the ship is about to leave."** Now she understood the Lord's plan! Her necessary permits were prepared in record time and 48 hours later she was in Odessa ready to board the ship. They sailed from Odessa to Sebastopol where the pilgrims joined the ship.

In the port of Sebastopol she was overwhelmed by the sight of so many inspired by one desire – to reach Mecca – the birthplace of Muhammad and the holiest site in Islam. All the countries of Central Asia were represented: Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, the Kanates of Bukhara and Khiva, Turkmenistan, Kashgaria (Chinese Turkestan), Persia, Afghanistan, the Tartars from the Volga, Siberia and the Ural mountain tribes from the Caucasus. They poured out of the barracks where they had been waiting for weeks to leave for Arabia. Most were older men but there were some women and children. On this first trip there were about 1000 passengers. Her uniform was familiar to many of them because of the many hospitals across Russian Turkestan. It was a witness without words, but still a powerful message.

Since coming to the Muslims of Central Asia in 1910 Jenny had set her heart on entering Afghanistan not realising entrance was forbidden to all Christians. Now on the steamer she had the rare opportunity to show love to a group of Afghans – 20 or 30 – who kept to themselves. They were an aggressive looking group of men. Due to her hurried departure she hadn't been able to bring any literature. Her goal was simply to make friends. She didn't feel it the right time to say anything negative about pleasing God by doing the Hajj. They were misguided but they knew no better. They had a genuine desire to please God. He is the All-Merciful One who can reveal Himself. Her job was to show care and compassion.

This group of pilgrims disembarked at Haifa to complete the journey overland. The ship returned to Sebastopol where a larger group of pilgrims was waiting to board. They were soon off again en route to

Jeddah. As they drew near there was a heightened fervour among the pilgrims especially in the Shi'ite gatherings. On arrival, all donned their Hajj attire before stepping on to the sacred soil of Arabia and making the 95 km journey overland – mostly by train – to Mecca.

Jenny recalls the moment, **"As we docked at sunrise it was a stunning scene – dark brown mountains and yellow desert – the town of Jeddah built from coral rocks the 'Red' Sea crystal green with white coral beaches."** Amidst all this beauty she was overwhelmed with the consciousness that this was Arabia – closed to messengers of the Cross. The land, the people and the creed stood even now flint-like against the claims of the Son of God.

It was mid-October. Eid al-Adha was November 8. They received an urgent message to sail back to Sebastopol to transport another load of pilgrims. There was a still greater group of Afghans on board this time. They reached Jeddah just in time. There were two weeks before return journey began.

Jenny was sick for some days, but as soon as she could she went by boat to Jeddah. She wrote, **"I must step on the soil of Arabia! I brought before the Lord the words He had given to Joshua, 'Every place that the soul of your foot shall tread upon shall be yours'. I sat on a stone facing the gate into the sacred city and in my heart I took possession of it by faith offering Jeddah to the Lord."**

She was wearing her Russian Red Cross sister's uniform. Suddenly a stone hit her on the chest. She smiled at the young Arab who had thrown it. He had a defiant look that slowly turned to shamefaced as she sat unperturbed. She felt somehow she had won.

It was almost the end of their two weeks in Jeddah. A telegram came from Mecca saying that cholera had broken out in Mecca immediately after the slaughter of tens of thousands of animals at the day of Arafat. It seemed to be a deadly form of cholera since all those affected had died. They were urged to get ready for an in-rush of panic-stricken and probably infected pilgrims. Many were beyond help when they arrived back at the ship. They sailed as fast as they could to the quarantine campus at the entrance to the Suez Canal. The ship remained in quarantine for 17 days. Jenny stayed well.

So this episode ended. During the quieter return journey Jenny had time to think over these events and ask herself some questions before the Lord. She had been in the company of almost 5000 Muslims during the three trips coming and going to Arabia. Had she rightly understood God's mind? He had led her more than a year before to the Afghan frontier to meet the worn out pilgrims returning from Mecca. Should she have made more of what is called 'Christian propaganda'? Had she made good use of this unique opportunity or where had she failed? What did God want her to learn from this time for further service?

She asked forgiveness for what He might have seen even though it was unknown to her. His Spirit witnessed to her that He was pleased with her service and would lead her further along the road she had started. In many ways she felt that her presence was the key thing – someone who was there for them. Even though she was an outspoken 'Jesus-woman' with His sign conspicuous on her chest still her love was appreciated. She felt a bridge had been thrown from her to them. Would anyone of them allow God's Holy Spirit to lead them on into living touch with the Saviour?

In December 1912 Jenny was free again to take up the work in Turkistan. She did so knowing that in 1913 she was to go back to Arabia. After much prayer a plan began to take shape. She submitted this by letter to three friends in Cairo: Samuel Zwemer, Temple Gairdner and Mr A T Upson.

This was the proposal: to form a group of Muslim specialists – an evangelist – a medical worker – a practical manager and a lady (as mother). They would ask the Turkish authorities ruling that part of Arabia to lease to this group as many as possible of the caravanserays at Jeddah for the months just before Hajj, during Hajj and just after. Not one of the three ever sent an answer! Perhaps they didn't think it possible. Still Jenny clung to the belief that God would use her in some way with pilgrims.

She was very busy translating tracts and Scripture booklets into Uzbek. While doing this, her thoughts crystallised into decision and joyful hope. In July 1913 she left Turkistan and set out for Arabia by way of

England and Switzerland. She told no one of her plans but asked the Lord to put His seal on this project by a special and unmistakable word.

Her brother-in-law was the vicar of St Luke's, Finchley in London. As she attended his church the lesson read was Luke 5:4-5, ***"The Lord said to Peter, 'Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draft'. Peter answered, 'At Your word I will let down the net.' "*** Jenny's heart leapt. She knew this was the seal!

Some days later she met Zwemer at a conference in Zurich. She hadn't seen him since 1908 when he had been used of God at Keswick to call her into mission work. He asked about her plans after the conference. She explained that she was on the way to Jeddah to open a dispensary there during the Hajj and the Eid. He was thrilled and offered her the use of a house in Jeddah he had rented for an Armenian evangelist they had sent from Cairo, but who was no longer there. At the end of July she arrived in Cairo to make preparations. She got inoculations, put together a pharmacy and got supplies of literature in many languages. She realised that her lack of Arabic was a handicap but she was mainly called to Central Asian pilgrims, so from their languages she already knew the script.

She set out for Jeddah in the sweltering heat at the end of August 1913. Zwemer's house was in a good neighbourhood on the seashore with the consulates nearby. Like all the houses it was narrow but six stories high with the usual flat roof. Each storey had two rooms and a dark closet. Jenny lived on the second floor and the rest of the house was empty. She was the only European woman in the whole of Jeddah. She records that during the three months she was allowed to stay the Lord never let her fall into despondency or doubt or fear. She knew He would never fail her. The only adornment in her house was a text painted on the wall by her in Arabic script: 2 Cor. 4:5, ***"We your servants for Jesus sake."***

On September 1 she began to look for a suitable place for a dispensary. Her house was too far from the pilgrim caravanserays. She rented two rooms in a caravanseray. She painted a text on the wall which she changed from time to time. Her first text was Heb. 10:4, ***"It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins."*** Most couldn't read so she explained it to them.

When everything was ready she asked the Turkish officials to inspect the clinic. The work grew. She hired an Arabic speaking Uzbek as an interpreter. As well as the pilgrims, many others came – both men and women even Bedouin from the desert. Because of her lack of Arabic she always offered them booklets that were mostly received well. The administration opened a clinic for men modelled on what they had seen in her clinic. In addition to the clinic she also visited ladies in their homes.

A few incidents were of great encouragement to her. The re-supply of Scriptures and tracts was usually by mail from Port Said or Cairo. This mail didn't pass through any customs/censor. Once "by mistake" the packages arrived by ship. They were impounded at the customs and taken to the Khadi (judge). He found himself incompetent to decide what should be done. He said the whole shipment must be sent to the authorities in Mecca for their decision. So hundreds of Psalms and Gospel portions were sent to Mecca! Only God Himself could have arranged this! Several weeks later the Khadi returned to Jenny a few copies of Psalms. All the Gospel portions had been kept in Mecca.

Several men in the community that Jenny had treated on her previous visit and with whom she had had a good relationship, asked her – one after the other – to say the Muslim creed. When she would not and declared that she was a Christian they turned against her. This was a great sorrow but not surprising. She wrote: "**It has been my conviction during all my life of adventurous service in Siberia and Russia Central Asia and now in Arabia that every step set in faith in God on enemy soil has spiritual value. Even if outwardly unsuccessful, in the heavenly headquarters such a step would be marked as an advance. This assurance upheld, encouraged and comforted me during many lonely years of pioneer work – that in Christ's service no effort along the God-appointed road could be an absolute failure.**"

Before her arrival in Jeddah she had dared to hope that the Lord might open to her the door to Mecca. Before leaving Cairo she had asked Mr A. T. Upson of the Nile Mission Press to compose a letter in his perfect Arabic to the Meccan Governor with a request to let her enter and help any of the women of

Mecca who needed her help. This request was not granted and she was asked to leave Jeddah by the next steamer to Suez. She reached Cairo on Christmas Eve 1913. After reporting to her friends there she left for Turkistan.

In July 1914 once again Jenny left Bukhara to return to Jeddah for Hajj/Eid. Her house was still rented from the previous year. She arrived in Berlin the day of the murder in Sarajevo that sparked the First World War. After some time to rebuild her health she left on August 1 as Germany and Russia were mobilising. At Trieste she boarded a steamer for Alexandria. While crossing the Mediterranean a 'Marconigram' was received announcing the declaration of war between Germany and Russia. On arrival in Alexandria she heard that Britain and France had joined Russia in declaring war on Germany. No Germans or Austrians could disembark at Alexandria. She was able to do so with a Russian passport. She prepared for her return to Jeddah. She had brought with her German gold coins that she planned to exchange for British or Turkish pounds, but all the banks in Cairo refused them! What was she to do?

She heard that the last steamer for Jeddah would leave in a day or two. As she wandered sadly round the streets unsure what to do, she felt a sudden urge to turn into a small street where she had never been before. To her amazement there was a bank. She offered her gold coins for exchange. At precisely that moment a man came into the bank. His purpose was to buy German gold to send to his mother in Germany. She exchanged her coins, bought her ticket and caught the steamer. Once on board she knew why God had directed her to this particular voyage. She had bought a first-class ticket, but on boarding was informed that her cabin had been requested for one of the Arab Sheikhs of the suite of Sheikhs Abdullah and Faisal sons of the Shareef of Mecca who were to sail with this steamer. This party was returning from a visit to the Sultan in Istanbul. The only first and second class passengers were this party and Jenny. She wrote, **"I remember well the solemn feeling on hearing this news. Again God had stepped in and kept me in Cairo so I would catch this boat. I was often on my knees in the small airless cabin that had been assigned to me pleading for grace, wisdom and courage to make the most of this unique opportunity of travelling with such outstanding personages of the Muslim World."**

The steamer pulled in at all the small ports along the shores of the Sinai Peninsula – especially Aqaba and Yanbu – where the Shareef's sons were greeted respectfully by all the inhabitants. This made the journey a few days longer. Jenny met the Shareef's party and the Sheikhs who accompanied them on the passenger deck where she settled with her Arabic grammar. Sheikh Abdullah approached her and offered to teach her the right pronunciation. It seems that he knew who she was because he never asked her why she was travelling to Jeddah. They spoke partly in French and partly in Persian. She was grieved at her lack of Arabic. Here was this key man in Arabia and she was not able to explain to him the truth for which she was known to stand. She wondered why the Lord had given this task to her.

In Yanbu the people had presented the noble Sheikhs Abdullah and Faisal with the gift of a sheep. This gave Jenny an idea. She put 12 tracts in Arabic and Uzbek together. She bound them with a nice silk ribbon and after committing herself and tracts to the Lord who had so obviously brought her into touch with the Shareef's party; she went up on deck, found Sheikh Abdullah sitting with his Sheikhs and addressed him in French. She begged him to accept her gift as he had the gift of the men from Yanbu, telling him it was the gift of words from the 'Kalam-Allah'. He seemed pleased and interested and invited her to sit next to him. She read all the titles to him: **The Oneness of God; The Noble Sacrifice; The Ladder of Prophecy; The Annulled and The Annulling** and so on. He took the tracts and read the titles again to the Sheikhs then he turned to Jenny and said, "Let us find an interpreter and talk about these matters." They tried to use the ship's doctor as an interpreter but he was very unsympathetic to the topic and Jenny preferred to manage by herself. They talked together for about an hour with Sheikh Abdullah repeating to the others the things she had told him. The next morning they reached Jeddah.

Jenny settled back into her house. She had promised the Russian Consul she would not start treating patients until her certificate to practice had arrived from St Petersburg. During the trip from Suez to Jeddah she had received an inner warning that this time she should not accept any drink or food she might be offered by any Muslim. It was a definite command and she knew she must obey. She followed

this strictly during the three short weeks she was allowed to stay in Jeddah. This time she didn't receive the usual friendliness from the people she had met on previous occasions. The Russian Consul urged her to leave. She felt she must wait for that inner voice of guidance releasing her from the present task. It came just as a steamer was ready to leave and she embarked. Later she learned that the authorities in Mecca had told the Consul she would be killed if she did not leave on that steamer.

On arrival in Cairo Jenny shared the events of recent weeks with Dr. and Mrs Zwemer. She was seeing her quick departure from Jeddah as a defeat, but Zwemer told her he believed it was actually a victory! He suggested following up the time with Sheikh Abdullah by sending him the most beautiful Bible in Arabic. The inscription in beautiful handwriting said, **"In memory of the Christian woman who travelled in your company to Jeddah."** There is no doubt that this Bible reached him. Jenny commented, "*It is for the Lord of the Harvest to judge whether the seed sown will have brought forth fruit unto eternal life.*"

After leaving Egypt in autumn 1914, Jenny spent the war years partly in Turkistan, partly in Switzerland and partly in America. Since the Revolution in 1917 the Communist Party had put great pressure on the Russian aristocracy. Those with a faith in Christ were especially under pressure. Many were arrested. In 1921 her plan to return to Turkistan matured. Her family and friends said it was far too dangerous but she knew God wanted her to go. She knew those witnessing for Christ were being heavily persecuted. She wrote, "*I knew that sooner or later in Soviet Russia I would be deprived of my freedom. I chose to go voluntarily, knowing the path ahead would be difficult.*"

In May 1922 Jenny arrived back in Turkistan under Soviet control. She brought with her 8000 Uzbek tracts, but she had to send them back through Persia the way she had come under threat of having them publicly burned as 'counter-revolutionary literature'. The next years were hard. She had lost all her assets in Russia through revolution and currency collapse. She had not yet inherited any money abroad. She continued to share God's love with those around her.

She realised her only choice was to live among the Uzbek people as one of them. She was introduced to an old Uzbek couple living in Tashkent on the only bit of land the Soviet government had allowed the man to keep of the forty compounds he had owned. He had been one of the richest landowners but was now reduced to poverty. Jenny put before him her request to become a paying guest in their home and to share in family life. After some consideration he agreed on the simple condition that no man would ever visit her. She was glad to accept and rented the little mud hut right away. She quickly felt accepted as part of their family. The lady was very friendly to her and she had complete freedom to share her faith with them both. For three consecutive years she spent 2-4 months each spring in this little hut in the orchard. The old man listened to Jenny but stubbornly persisted in the ways of his religion. She wrestled for his soul. She knew that Satan was holding him back from receiving the truth. There were unmistakeable signs that she may soon be arrested and she realised this third summer would be the last she would spend with these dear friends.

The authorities ordered the chief Mullah of Tashkent to go to the compound and gather material enough for the Soviet Government to accuse Jenny of active Christian propaganda considered anti-revolutionary and so against Soviet law. The Mullah came. The old lady disappeared and Jenny had a long talk with the Mullah about Christian teaching. She pointed out to him some discrepancies in the Qur'an. The old man had been silently listening. Suddenly he spoke, "*Our friend has told us that when we come to stand before Allah on the Judgement Day, Isa Al-Masih will be the one to intercede for us then*".

That was all he said but it thrilled Jenny's soul. It proved that his soul had opened to the hope of having Jesus as an intercessor on the Judgement Day. So the day came when Jenny had to leave. Suddenly the old man spoke, "*Now I will tell you what made me take you at once into our intimacy. Before I ever saw you coming into our garden, I had already seen you! As soon as I set eyes on you I recognised you as the woman God had shown me in a dream and when you came to us I knew it was God who had sent you to me.*"

She was arrested in July 1927. At first she was detained in a prison in St. Petersburg. But before long she was transferred to a prison for political detainees in Moscow. She arrived there on September 1, 1927.

She was shown into a waiting room where officials were at work. She wrote. **"As I entered this room a flood of memory-pictures woke in my mind. This very room had been the salesroom of the British and Foreign Bible Society. More than once I had bought my stock of Scriptures here. I had started out on my first trip in 1909 with boxes full of Scriptures in many languages from this place."**

After a wait of some hours she was questioned and inspected together with her possessions and then taken to a cell full of women prisoners who were held there before internment in one of the state prisons. Late in the evening she was taken to a prison nearby. It was a long low building. It had been a hotel. The inmates called it 'The Ship'. The regime was strict. There were no women guards – only soldiers. Each prisoner had a narrow iron bed with a straw mattress. They received just one hot meal a day – a bowl of soup from half-cooked barley and half-raw salted fish. Hot tea, a lump of sugar and a piece of black bread were the rest of the daily rations. It was worse than any of the prisons that followed in the next eight years.

Jenny was the oldest of the prisoners and she was the only one who had been arrested for 'religious' causes that the government called 'counter-revolutionary'. Jenny described the situation, **"I felt strangely weak and indifferent to all about me, as if my soul was numbed to outward impressions, but yet I felt in my spirit a living nucleus in touch with God and I could pray and rest on Him. I had been given grace for my arrest – already two months ago – to willingly put my neck under the yoke which My Father's hand had put on me – the yoke of Jesus that He had said was "easy and light". I was determined with His help to carry it where and as long as He should will me to."**

The days passed drearily. Sometimes she was called to the 'Judge of Instruction'. He tried to get her to argue with him about religion. Unhappy at her responses he said, **"What do you say to a revolver?"** There was one lying on his desk. Jenny looked at him quietly for some minutes and then said, **"You may do what you like. Your revolver will not separate me from Jesus Christ."**

Other 'instructors' were less aggressive. She asked one man why she had been arrested – was it for being a believer. His response was that they didn't care about that but it was the 'propaganda'. When she told the other prisoners the reason for her arrest they just kept aloof. Their behaviour revealed to Jenny the sad state of their hearts. They were kind to her but Jenny knew she desperately needed the strengthening of the Holy Spirit if these were to be her longterm companions.

After two weeks she was called out with her belongings and learned she was to be transferred to another prison – this time the big compound of the 'Butyrky' – a place of detention for over eleven thousand men and women deprived of their freedom. The journey was difficult all piled on top of one another in a black van. She felt in despair! Suddenly through a small window above the guard's head there was a chink of sky between the buildings. Jenny wrote, **"There broke on my vision a sunset of such overpowering beauty and majesty and unearthly glory that I was instantly flooded with adoration through my whole being. It lasted only a few seconds but is still engraved on my memory."** It wasn't just the beauty; to Jenny it was a clear message from the Sovereign of the Earth who was also her Father. It brought strength to her soul.

She often lost track of relatives as she was moved from place to place. Her sister in England (Mrs Howe) eventually tracked her down and was able to send little food parcels and books to her through the Red Cross in Moscow. During her years of detention Jenny was spared any physical abuse. She was often interrogated. She was crammed in with many prisoners. She writes, **"I must confess that many midnight interrogations oppressed me and affected my mind. I suffered the feeling of pressure and internal stress that resulted in bad dreams and nightmares. Body and nerves were often battered. I had three months of absolute loneliness. The walls were cold and damp where the water ran down. I had terrible headaches. I was deprived of sleep because of the nightly interrogations. When the director inspected the cells at night he often found me sitting on my bed shivering and moaning in pain."**

She wasn't always in isolation. She wrote**, "Although a prisoner in chains, I was free to sow the precious seed and so obey My Master's calling. I shared about Him and even read the Gospel aloud despite the disapproval of the prison administration."** When she was moved to another prison one of the other prisoners said, **"With Jenny as our companion Jesus Christ was among us."**

Jenny spent 5½ years in 'freedom' and 8½ years as a prisoner in eight different prisons. The times of "freedom" were not real freedom although she could live in a small house on her own and plant a flower garden. She wrote to her sister, "**I felt the presence of God. Day after day I received from Him the strength I needed.**" Reflecting on these prison experiences years later she said, "**In falls and failure I found forgiveness; in suffering of body and soul, comfort in the experience of His presence; in my testimony for Him joy and blessing. Yes, in all I found Him faithful who had promised.**"

In the late autumn of 1935 Jenny received news that she was among a group of prisoners who had been freed. They were to go to Moscow and then to Melitopol on the northern shore of the Black Sea. From there they must go to relatives in Western Europe. She later learned that Earl Buxton had intervened on their behalf during a visit to Stalin.

Jenny wrote, "**I have often been asked how I can understand why the Lord let me go where He knew I would be arrested and why He left me so long in the hands of His enemies. I can say with joyful thanks that I always believed in His ways and His guidance. The suffering was not punishment. It was used to purify. Who of us can say he doesn't need this? I was certain that the Lord had a specific purpose as I was sent to different prisons as well as in the times of exile. I have dedicated my life to Him and moved out in His service in the hope that He would use me in such work in His vineyard as was not being done by other individuals or societies. In His mercy He granted my request.**"

In the final years of her life Jenny emigrated to Canada where she completed her earthly journey. Many Russian believers had also chosen Toronto as their home and she was able to serve them in many ways. She died in 1947 aged 82.

Jenny wrote: "**God Almighty does need, for the fulfilment of His plans, men and women ready to step out in daring obedience, willing to be reckoned "fools for Christ's sake", leaving the responsibility for such exploits to the Master.**"

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In the introduction to Jenny's book, **Adventures with God**, Samuel Zwemer wrote, "**To all those who are pioneers in hard places, to all who wrestle in prayer for the coming of the Kingdom, to all who realise that the church again faces an age of martyrdom for the truth … this book … will be treasured as a witness that God is still working with those who preach everywhere and 'confirming the word with signs following.' "**



Emir Faisal and the Arab Delegation on the ship to Jeddah 1914



Butyrky Prison

On her way to Jeddah by boat Jenny wrote, "**I must step on the soil of Arabia! I brought before the Lord the words He had given to Joshua, 'Every place that the soul of your foot shall tread upon shall be yours'. I sat on a stone facing the gate into the sacred city and in my heart I took possession of it by faith offering Jeddah to the Lord.**"