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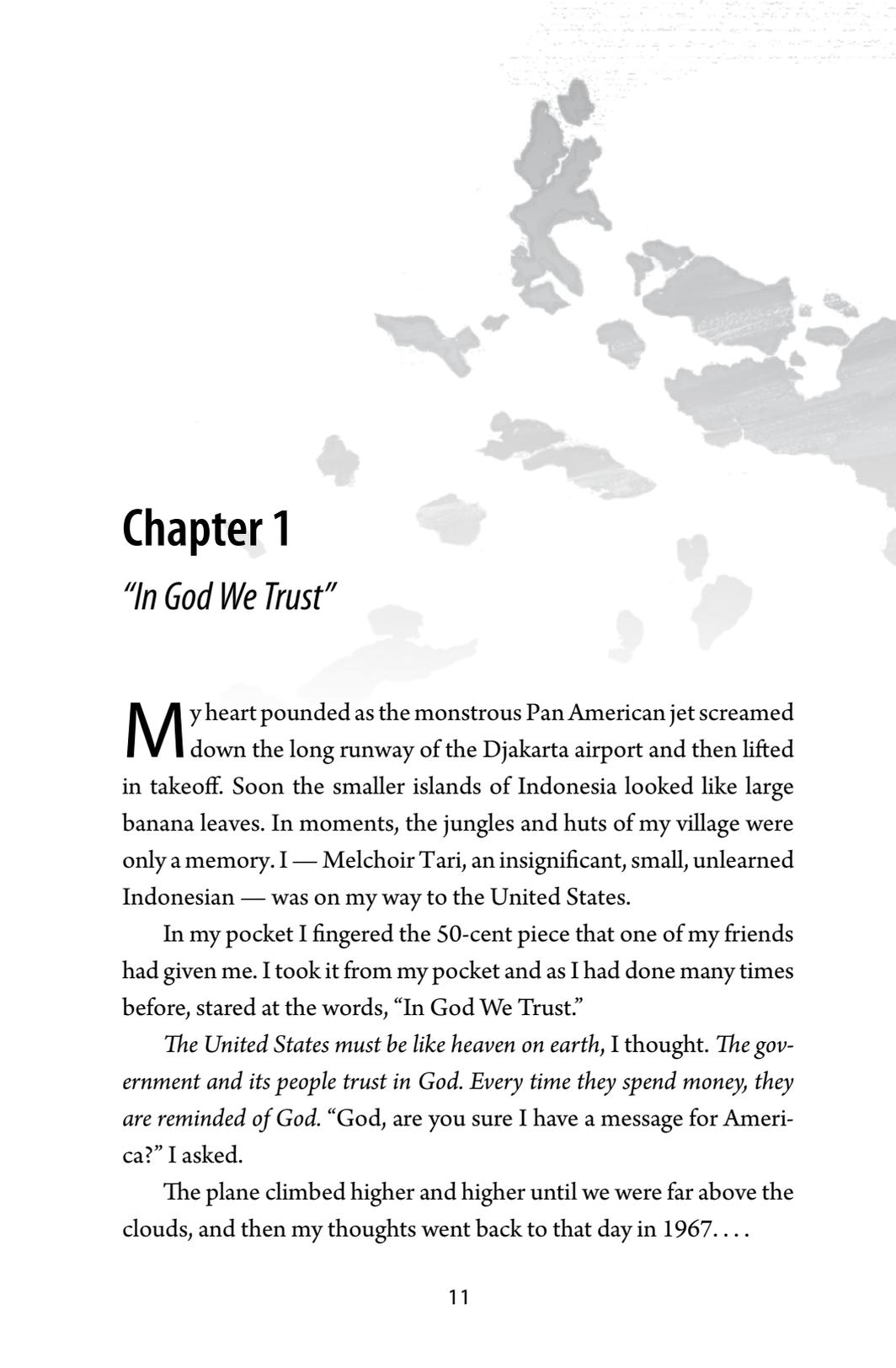


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Chapter 1

“In God We Trust”

My heart pounded as the monstrous Pan American jet screamed down the long runway of the Djakarta airport and then lifted in takeoff. Soon the smaller islands of Indonesia looked like large banana leaves. In moments, the jungles and huts of my village were only a memory. I — Melchoir Tari, an insignificant, small, unlearned Indonesian — was on my way to the United States.

In my pocket I fingered the 50-cent piece that one of my friends had given me. I took it from my pocket and as I had done many times before, stared at the words, “In God We Trust.”

The United States must be like heaven on earth, I thought. The government and its people trust in God. Every time they spend money, they are reminded of God. “God, are you sure I have a message for America?” I asked.

The plane climbed higher and higher until we were far above the clouds, and then my thoughts went back to that day in 1967. . . .

“Mel,” God had said, “I am going to send you to the United States to tell them about Me.”

That’s impossible! I thought. *There is no way. It would take more money than I could save the rest of my life.*

“Don’t worry about that,” the Lord told me. “I have called you and I will make the way.”

When the Indonesian revival started, many received prophecies from the Lord that He would send us from Indonesia all over the world. At that time, we had no idea whom the Lord would send. But I kept thinking, especially before I joined the teams, that if I were one of the chosen, it would be pretty nice.

That is the very reason the Lord didn’t allow me to join the first team that went out with the gospel. I was not chosen until team number 42. The Lord wanted me to get my motives right. One day I was desperate. “Lord, why don’t You choose me?” I asked. “You chose my sister, and she’s no more spiritual or better than me. As a matter of fact, she is worse than me in many things. When You compare the others to me, I am as fit as they are and, Lord, maybe better.”

The Lord spoke to me in a still, small voice. “Mel, your motives are wrong. You want to serve Me, but not in the hard places of the jungles. You want to go all over the world, and that is not right. So I cannot use you now.”

Finally I repented of this silly motive, and I was called to be a member of a team three months after the revival had started. Two years after that, God spoke to me again. This time He told me that I was to go to the United States. By that time, I had lost interest in leaving Indonesia. My mind was confused with ideas I had gotten from the missionaries. They said if any of us went to America we would be spoiled by the money, the cars, the rich food, and the other luxuries that almost everyone in America enjoyed.

"In God We Trust"

But after weeks of reading the Bible and praying, I realized that to come to America was God's plan for me. Still, God made me wait. He made it very clear that I was to come to the United States in 1970 and not before.

The devil almost got me to come one year too soon.

In 1969, a family in America sent a telegram and money for my flight, but the Lord said very clearly, "Don't take it!"

I thanked them, but said, "I am sorry. This is not God's time."

"Mel, you are stupid," my friends told me. "If the money came in, it was from God, and you should have taken it. Don't you want to go?"

"Sure I want to go to America, but now isn't God's time!" I replied.

God Says, "Go!"

One year after that, the Lord said to me, "Now is the time to go!" So I went to the fellowship for confirmation.

"Will you pray for me?" I asked one of my sisters in the Lord. "I must have God's guidance for something very important."

"What do you need to know?" she asked.

"I can't tell you because you would think it over, and if you liked the idea, you would say yes, and if you didn't, you would say no. I would have only your opinion and not God's," I told her. "I will pray, and while I do, you watch God's television and tell me what happens."

God had given many people in Indonesia the gift of visions. We just go to them and ask them to watch God's "television." He shows them future events just as though they are on a screen. So I prayed and said, "God, You know I need Your guidance, so please let my sister here know so she can tell me. You have spoken to me, but I want You to confirm it through her."

When I finished praying, I asked, “What did God show you?”

“It is pretty strange,” my sister replied. “I saw you standing among many people, but they are not like us. They have white skin. Many of them have yellow hair. Their eyes are different from ours. Many of the men are over six feet tall. I also didn’t understand what you were saying. You were speaking in a very strange-sounding tongue. I don’t know what country I saw. But God told me to tell you that you are to do what He has told you to do, and that you are to do it now, because it is His will. Mel, what is all this? Please explain it to me.”

I told her that the people she saw in the vision were Americans and that we were speaking English, and that she should praise God with me because through her He had confirmed that I was to go to the United States.

God’s Miraculous Provision

Many other confirmations followed. One night after we had prayed together in the church, the Lord said, “Go now! Prepare to leave the day after tomorrow.”

“Oh no, God, this is impossible,” I replied. “There is no way I could ever raise that much money so soon. I do not have one single coin in my pocket.”

But the Lord insisted. “Tell your friends and family that you will leave for the United States in two days.”

I had better not tell them; they will think I am crazy, I thought. But because God kept telling me to, I obeyed even though it looked impossible.

“The day after tomorrow I leave for America,” I announced. And my family and friends did just what I thought they would: they laughed.

“Mel, that’s impossible. You’re crazy,” they said.

“Mel, I’m glad you have told me, but please don’t tell anyone else,” my father said. “They will think you are crazy.”

"In God We Trust"

The first big thing I needed was transportation to the capital city of Timor, which is Kupang. Kupang is about 70 miles from my village of Soe. If you ever come to Timor, you will understand why I was so concerned on this point. Travel in my country is very hard. Sometimes, if you are lucky, you can ride on a government truck. But most people have to walk over the jungle trails.

At that time the Lord spoke to two sisters in Djakarta and told them that I needed help. They were told to fly to Kupang, hire a jeep, go to Soe, and bring Mel Tari back to Djakarta.

"God, Mel has just returned to Soe, and now You mean that You want us to go and get him?" they protested. (I had been a speaker at a missionary conference in Bandung.) The Lord told them to go anyhow, so they flew the 1,500 miles to Timor. There they hired a jeep and came to Soe. They arrived at my home that night. They came to me and said, "Mel, do you need passage to Djakarta?"

"Praise the Lord. Yes, I am ready to go," I replied.

At this same time I received a cable from America that said, **MONEY HAS BEEN PUT IN BANK AT KUPANG FOR YOU TO GO TO DJAKARTA. ROUND TRIP TICKET TO AMERICA AT PAN AM TICKET COUNTER.**

This cable came from a family I had never heard of. The Lord had just spoken to them, saying, "Send money to Indonesia to bring Mel Tari here." They had never met me, but they obeyed the Lord and sent the money.

I took the cable to the bank and got the money to go to Djakarta. But when I arrived in Djakarta, I really had a problem. How was I going to get a visa to America? I had no sponsor!

I went to the American vice-consul, and he did not want to give me a visa. "Who is going to sponsor you?" he asked.

"The Lord Jesus," I replied.

“He’s a nice guy, maybe,” he said. “But we cannot accept Him as your sponsor.”

I left the office that morning without a visa. After lunch — and much prayer — the Lord told me to go back to the consulate and ask the second time for my visa.

When I returned, the vice-consul was gone, and I talked to a woman. She turned out to be the consul.

“Who is your sponsor?” she asked.

“The Lord Jesus,” I replied.

Without hesitation, she wrote out my visa and handed it to me.

“How will you live in America?” she asked.

“The Lord will supply everything I have need of. He has promised me,” I answered.

“Oh,” she said. “Maybe you will be a burden on America.”

“No, I’ll never become a burden to anyone in America,” I answered. “If the Lord Jesus can take the burden of the whole world, surely He can care for me.”

After I left, I said, “Now, Lord, you have really proven yourself. But Lord, You know I can’t speak English very well.”

“You just go ahead and I will take care of the language problem,” the Lord said. “If when you get ready to speak and can’t, you tell the people, ‘My Jesus failed me.’”

Off the Plane

Just then I heard the giant jet engines slow down and the “fasten your seat belt” sign came on. I heard the stewardess say, “Please fasten your seat belts as we are preparing to land at the Los Angeles International Airport.”

Oh, the joy that filled my soul. *Americn, America*, I thought. *The land where all the people trust in God*. “Oh, Jesus, thank you for letting me come to this heaven on earth,” I prayed. “And let me know what

"In God We Trust"

You want me to tell these people who already know so much about You."

Little did I realize then the many, many times the Lord would have to prove himself to me in America, for I not only needed to speak English better and to have money to live on, but I also needed to really grasp the fact that the words on the coin, "In God We Trust," were not always true.

I could hardly walk off the plane I was so excited. The building was so large and new. It really was wonderful. I walked and walked down a long hall to a large room where people were sitting and there were things for sale.

"Oh, no! This isn't America!" I cried. "The devil has made the plane land at the wrong place."

Everywhere I looked I saw dirty books, bars with liquor, and everyone seemed to be smoking. *What's wrong?* I thought. *God help me!*