

# My Refugee Journey & God's Intervention

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My name is Jackson. I am from the southern parts of Iran, from a city called Ahvaz. The story of my faith began in 2010 when I embraced Christianity through friends in the neighbourhood. I was born and raised in a Muslim family, but I never believed in Islam or any other faith for that matter. Therefore, in my early teens, I grew apart from supernatural-based beliefs. In my late teens, I was a full-on passionate and disturbed neo-atheist. To make a long story short, through my part-time job, I got to know an underground church in the neighbourhood, which was affiliated with the Assemblies of God. I had a two-hour meeting with the pastor of the church, Pastor Farhad, and he spoke for two hours while I just listened. The way the message of the Gospel touched my heart that day was unbelievable; a process was started, a process that is still ongoing to this day. God intervened! But it's been

a bumpy road, to say the least.

I was forced to leave the country due to threats I faced for my activity and connection with the Christian community in my hometown. The country next to Iran, Turkey, was a refuge for Christian converts and dissidents from Iran at the time. It was easy to get to, so I escaped and sought refugee asylum in Turkey through United Nations (UNHCR).

Unexpectedly, from 2014 to 2024, I was stuck in that country as a refugee, and life for a refugee in a country like Turkey is unnecessarily hard. You face discrimination of many sorts, from government authorities to everyday people.

However, after a while, like many others, God blessed my life. By pulling my resources and abilities together, I managed to make a humble living and avoid brutal black-market jobs. This, in itself, was a true blessing. Again, God intervened! There were moments when I was walking on the sidewalk, going about my day in the city I used to live in, and God would just speak to me, reminding me that He is blessing me beyond measure.

However, the situation got worse in Turkey for Christian refugees, and Turkish Authorities started deporting people by force, rounding up refugees and putting them in camps for an uncertain amount of time. It was as if I was reliving the hard days of persecution in Iran, but this time it was worse. I was stuck there; it was like an open-air prison. I could not leave the city premises, and any small mistake could put me in a deportation camp. It was as if an axe was hanging above my head!

The fear was crippling, the fear that any day or hour, something like this can happen, just took sleep away from my eyes, and I went to dark places – a different story for another day. But again, God intervened! He intervened so that today I may live and talk about what He has done for me all these years. In my humble opinion and experience, God directly intervenes and saves people; it can be through a sign, a word of encouragement, a job to sustain you or literal act of saving someone, which is how I got here to Canada with you.



He intervened through your community — through your prayers, your compassion, and your practical help. I am especially grateful to ORAT and my sponsoring church, who have become my spiritual family here in Canada. They stayed in contact with me throughout the waiting period and encouraged me to prepare for a new beginning, rather than grow idle or discouraged.

Thanks to that support and preparation, I was able to hit the ground running. Within my first two months in Canada, I obtained both my car and motorcycle licenses. Because I had studied English in advance, I also secured full-time employment early on. I often tell other refugee friends still waiting abroad: learn the language and prepare yourself — it makes all the difference.

Today, I'm giving back by helping my sponsoring church assist others who are still stuck in difficult situations. It's the least I can do to express my gratitude for the freedom and opportunity I've found in this new home, Canada.

God bless you all for welcoming me into your midst.