

## Current Missions Group

has been "invaded" by Americans—forty-five thousand of them. There are twenty thousand in Teheran alone. This fact does create some problems, but the response of Iranians is basically friendly.

The people of Iran are Muslims, but they are not Arabs. The Muslim in Iran is of the Shiite sect. Most of the people of the Arab world are of the Sunni sect.

Technology has opened Iran to the Western mind. Christianity may have opportunity to speak to Iranians as they find the void which secularism brings into their lives.

A beautiful story comes out of the experience of an American couple from Miami, Florida. Associated



with an airline company, this couple was living in Pakistan. A young Pakistani lived with them during his high school and college days. When the American couple asked permission to take the young man to Miami, they had to promise not to try to win him away from his Islamic faith. Yet he became a Christian. After finishing college he came to Iran and married a beautiful Iranian girl. James Kirkendall had the privilege of baptizing her in 1975. The man is a deacon in the English-speaking Baptist church in Teheran.

Southern Baptist missionaries and other church members in Iran are trying to find a way to begin a ministry with the Iranian people. It is hoped that through the influence and concern of the Pakistani deacon and his Iranian wife in the Baptist church in Teheran, work with the Iranian people can be started.

### Iranians in the US

Many Iranian students—maybe as many as 20,000—are now studying in the United States.

James Kirkendall gives some suggestions for witnessing to Iranian

students in the United States. The Muslim is permitted by the Koran to embrace another religion as long as he does not do it with his whole heart. The culture of these people has taught them to do what they think their host wants them to do. All Americans are their hosts while they are studying in the US. Many students who "accepted" Christianity in the United States while they were students here, revert to Islam when they return to their own country and customs.

Mr. Kirkendall suggests that Christians in the US should, in a natural and "low-key" way, without putting pressure on them, lead their Iranian visitors to see that Christianity is an individual faith—one that has value of the individual. A Christian should not try to prove that the Bible is better than the Koran or that Christianity is better than Islam. That would be difficult—if not impossible. Christians in the United States must show the love of God in action whether the Iranian becomes a Christian or not. We must love and accept him as he is. Then, as the opportunity comes, we can share faith in Jesus Christ.

## Planning the Meeting

### AIM FOR STUDY

As each member becomes involved in this study, she will be able to make a list of prayer requests related to Baptist work in Iran.

### PLAN 1

Call on six women (or three if you have a small group) to help you present the information in the study material. Ask them to sit so the entire group can see and hear them well. Ask the rest of the group to listen, as the information is presented, for the answers to these questions:

1. How would you compare the country of Iran with your home state—in size, population, social customs, religion?
2. Who are some of the people who have played important parts in the beginning of Baptist work in Iran?
3. How can you relate to Iranians or other internationals who live in your community?

Another suggestion: If every member (or every other member) of your group has a copy of ROYAL SERVICE at the meeting, ask the

studying the material on pages 28-30 and working the hidden-words puzzle on page 31. After the group has worked as individuals or in pairs on the puzzle, lead the whole group in checking the answers.

**PRAYERTIME.**—Ask the group to recall the names of all the people in the material on Iran. List with the names some of their special needs. Pray about these. Pray also for at least two couples to go as missionaries to Iran who would be willing to learn the Persian language