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## The Educational Impact Of American Church Missionaries On The Educational Programs Of Iran (1834-1925 C.E.)

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THE EDUCATIONAL IMPACT OF AMERICAN CHURCH  
MISSIONARIES ON THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS OF IRAN  
(1834-1925 C.E.)

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School  
University of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

by  
Mansoor Soleimani

May 1980

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MISSIONARIES ON THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS OF IRAN  
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Abstract of Dissertation

The Problem: The present study is an historical study of the educational impact of American church missionaries in the 19th and 20th centuries on the educational programs of Iran. Western church missionaries, particularly Americans, were among the earliest foreign influence to affect the Iranian educational programs. Traditionally, education has been important in Iran's recorded history of 3,000 years. In old and medieval Iran, customs and religious laws were the prevailing systems that influenced individual and group behavior. They also dictated educational policy. When mosques were built under the Muslim faith they became the chief centers of schooling. This type of institutions failed to provide students with the previous traditional classical background of the 19th century. The American church missionaries established the first Western-type school in 1836. The continued such schools into the 20th century, until the Iranian government appropriated the schools during the 1930's.

Procedures: In order to analyze the educational impact of American church missionaries on the educational programs of Iran primary and secondary sources were studied. The data were collected by questionnaire method. The objectives were accomplished by surveying sixteen accessible American church missionaries who directly had worked in education in Iran. The generalizations from study apply specifically to the Presbyterian and Seventh-day Adventist missionaries but may have applicability to other church missionaries in Iran.

Findings and Conclusions: The American church missionaries affected Iranian education in several ways and promoted school modernization. They introduced to Iranians a new concept of education which was different from their traditional rote memorization. They helped Iranian girls go to school. The church school stimulated the Iranian government to establish its own school and to improve standards of education. Although the American church missionary impact seemed to prove productive, people resisted the attempt to change the Iranian religion. Iranian had tended to accept those practices which were in harmony with their own values and culture, and to oppose those which were not. The secular goals of missionary education attempts were more important to Iran than the religious ones.

Recommendations: Additional investigation should replicate the study in its broadest sense. This could involve a larger sampling of American church missionaries. It should include comments and evaluation from Iranians who were educated in American church missionary schools. This is the major limitation of this study. Further research should also examine the effectiveness of those Iranians who are the product of mission schools. Another focus would include other church missionaries from Western Europe and from other religions. Finally, more attention definitely should be given to the aims of missionaries.

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Grateful acknowledgment is given to the members of the dissertation committee for their valued counsel during the time of the preparation of the study. They are Dr. J. Marc Jantzen, Dean Emeritus, Chairman of the Committee; Dr. Fred Muskal and Dr. T. C. Coleman, School of Education; Dr. Marge Bruce, Raymond-Callison College; and Dr. Larry L. Pippin, Elbert Covell College.

During the data collecting period, several individuals graciously gave of their time and assistance, such as the Reverend Allen H. Swan, the Minister of a Presbyterian Church in Stockton, California, who was helpful to introduce me to a former missionary of Iran; the Reverend John A. Watson of Modesto, California, gave me a list of former American Presbyterian Church Missionaries to Iran; and Dr. Kenneth Oster was particularly helpful with a list of former Seventh-Day Adventist missionaries to Iran. The writer is also grateful to Mrs. Carol Sarnoff who conscientiously typed the dissertation.

Finally, and most importantly, it was my wife, Parvin, and my child, Arezou, who faithfully and lovingly coped with the moods of a full-time student and part-time husband and father.

Parvin, Arezou--this is our dissertation

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

Iran is an advanced developing country. The pace of development in recent years has become more dynamic, transforming virtually every aspect of life.<sup>1</sup> The change is both quantitative and qualitative, affecting the manner and the context in which life is lived in Iran. This change has affected the country as a whole, not simply the urban areas but also, and perhaps even more dramatically, the rural areas.<sup>2</sup>

Iran of today is a society undergoing such rapid transition that it has created conflict between old and new ideas. Learning to cope with modernism, materialism, and new technological processes while attempting to maintain its cultural heritage is Iran's ultimate aim.<sup>3</sup> Iranians want to provide a value-rich and creative environment, one in which the individual will be able to express himself/herself and to harness the material and technological

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<sup>1</sup> Amir abbas Hoveyda, "The Future of Iran," Iran: Past, Present, and Future, ed. Jane W. Jacqz (New York: Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, Press, 1975), p. 448.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Information, 100 Questions about Iran (Tehran: Information Office Press, 1971), pp. 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> Hoveyda, J. W. Jacqz, ed., op. cit., p. 447.

processes for improving the quality of life.<sup>4</sup>

Iranians consider material and social investment in education as the single most important guarantor of success in achieving the goals of development. Iranians are conscious of the fact that they still have a very long way to go before achieving the kind of quantitative transformation which has occurred previously in Iranian history.<sup>5</sup>

Traditionally, education has had a prominent role in Iran's recorded history of 3,000 years. Education in the Zoroastrian era was not restricted to the elementary level, but also included the higher branches of learning.<sup>6</sup>

The importance of education and training during and after the period of the Prophet Zoroastra (650-553 Before Common Era or B.C.E.) is noted in the Avesta (Zoroastrian scripture) which refers to Him as "The Teacher."<sup>7</sup> He made teaching an article of faith: "Teaching a brother, a friend, a stranger or someone from religions other than your own, is the responsibility of men in faith."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 451.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 450.

<sup>6</sup>Ministry of Information, The Development of Education in Iran (Tehran: Information Office Press, 1976), p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>8</sup>National Committee for World Literacy Program, Literacy: An Historical Necessity (Tehran: Bahman Press, 1976), p. 1.

The appearance of Islam in Iran in the seventh century fostered the growth of knowledge and learning. Numerous sayings and quotations reflect the importance which the prophet Mohammed placed on education: "The search for knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and woman;" "No poverty is worse than ignorance;" and, "The learned are God's trustees for man."<sup>9</sup>

Since the Arab invasion of the seventh century, a system of "maktab or madreseh" (school) under the "ulema" (the learned religious men) flourished in Iran. While educational opportunities were created in urban areas, isolated rural regions frequently lacked learning facilities.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the curriculum of the madreseh was largely oriented toward traditional subjects such as history, geography, philosophy, and religion. Students were members of the elite classes, primarily interested in education for intellectual development. In this period religious instruction was the order of the day. In the madresehs, mastery of reading, writing, and Islamic studies was accomplished by memorization and rote learning.<sup>11</sup> Until the first Western-type school was established

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<sup>9</sup>Ministry of Information, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>11</sup>Issa Sadiq, History of Education in Iran (Translation), (3d ed.; Tehran: Teacher Training College Press, 1963), pp. 274-79.

by the American church missionaries in 1836, no modern primary or secondary schools had existed in Iran.<sup>12</sup>

Since education was important for the Zoroastrians, the Muslims, and also for the small minority of Christians, the climate in Iran accepted the coming of American church missionaries. Reza Arasteh, an Iranian author, pointed out, "The tolerant attitude of Persians toward foreigners encouraged Christians to go to Iran,..."<sup>13</sup>

In 1832 a mission from an American missionary group, the Congregationalists (The American Board in Boston), was sent to Iran. This mission among the Assyrian, or Nestorian, Christians received warm hospitality and assurance that their work would be welcomed.<sup>14</sup> In 1832, Smith, one of the members of the mission said, "I see that this field is white and ready for the harvest. In my journey I have seen no people as willing to accept the gospel as the Assyrians of Persia. It is a good field for the work."<sup>15</sup>

American church missionaries were the first foreign group to bring Western-type education to Iran. As John

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<sup>12</sup>Reza Arasteh, Educational and Social Awakening in Iran (2d ed.; Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1969), p. 158.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>14</sup>John Elder, Mission to Iran (Tehran: The Literature Committee of the Church Council of Iran, undated), pp. 6-7.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

Elder in his book Mission to Iran pointed out, "On January 18, 1836 this first modern school in Iran launched forth with just seven students."<sup>16</sup> American church missionaries during their work of providing medical care, education, and guidance created a favorable impression of Americans in Iran.<sup>17</sup>

Arasteh pointed out that the Iranian government, as part of a nationalistic effort to provide its own educational programs, gradually assumed control over all foreign schools. In 1932 a law was passed making it illegal for any foreign school to accept Iranian students in the elementary grades one through six. A further measure was taken in 1939 when the State decreed that all foreign schools were to be administered by the Iranian government.<sup>18</sup>

A limited number of historical records on the growth of Western education in Iran exist, but most authors have failed to write of the impact of western church missionaries in general and American missionaries in particular. The few written reports which are mentioned have not gone beyond descriptive accounts of the growth in educational opportunities.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Information, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Arasteh, op. cit., p. 166.

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Information, op. cit., p. 9.

The proposed investigation is an historical study of the educational impact of American church missionaries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on the educational programs of Iran. The study will consider the impact of the practice in the mission schools of American church missionaries on Iranian educational programs.

#### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

While there is increasing discussion of current educational programs and policies in Iran, there is a relative lack of research dealing with the impact of western-type schools and the actual role such schools have played in transforming the society. A search of the Automated Information Retrieval Services of the University of California at Davis shows that little work has been done on the impact of American missionaries in Iran. The letter, signed by Jane A. Kimball, says:

I searched both ERIC (for educational articles) and the historical data bases. The resulting bibliography shows that not much work has been done. Because the word Christian and missionary turned up almost nothing, I used the words religion and church to broaden the search. The resulting bibliography shows that there is a lot of room for original research in this area.<sup>20</sup>

It would appear that American church missionaries have some impact on the educational programs of Iran. As

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<sup>20</sup>Based on personal correspondence between Jane A. Kimball, Reference Librarian of the University of California, Davis, and the researcher, March 3, 1978.

Issa Sadiq, an Iranian author, pointed out, "Western church missionaries, particularly Americans, were the first foreign influence to affect the Iranian Educational Programs."<sup>21</sup> It may be that, as Rippa says, "A knowledge of the past is indispensable to the clear analysis of conflicting educational points of view."<sup>22</sup>

Iran of today is changing rapidly. Learning to cope with modernization, materialism, and new technological processes while attempting to maintain its cultural heritage is necessary for improving the quality of this life.<sup>23</sup> The need of fully understanding history will help to deal with the present conflict between the old and new ideas.<sup>24</sup>

It is not clear whether it was the American church missionaries who brought the first Western-type schools to Iran which affected Iranian education, or whether the church missionaries happened to be in Iran at the time changes were taking place. The proposed study will attempt to identify the impact of the educational practices in the mission schools of American church missionaries on the Iranian educational programs in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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<sup>21</sup>Sadiq, op. cit., p. 356.

<sup>22</sup>Alexander S. Rippa, Education in Free Society (2d ed.; New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1971), p. vii.

<sup>23</sup>Hoveyda, Jane W. Jacqz, ed., op. cit., p. 450.

<sup>24</sup>Rippa, op. cit., p. viii.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The central purpose of this study is to extend information about the role of American church missionaries and their impact on the Iranian educational programs. Sequencing of elements and identifying new approaches or changes in programs are another aspect of this study.

An attempt will be made to locate sources as close in time and place as possible to the events under study. The study will include an historical overview, an examination of the impact of American church missionaries, analysis of specific missionaries' pedagogical practices, and an effort to trace their educational impact from the 1834 to 1925 Common Era or C.E. in Iran.

## PROCEDURE

The procedure for the study will be to research primary and secondary sources related to the educational impact of American church missionaries on the educational programs of Iran. They are as follows:

1. Publications. Books, periodicals, magazines, micro films, in the Union Theological Seminary Library in New York; and in other libraries in the United States of America and Iran.
2. Documents. Any documents available in the United States of America and Iran.
3. Personal and/or telephone interviews. Closed



and open interviews and/or telephone calls with some of the missionaries who have been in Iran at least ten years, some of whom now are living in a convalescent home in Duarte, California.

4. Interview with authorities. Personal and/or telephone interviews with ~~authorities who are knowledgeable~~ about this particular topic. Practical restraints preclude an intensive personal interview schedule outside the state of California.

5. Personal correspondence. Personal correspondence with authorities and organizations that are knowledgeable in this topic in the United States of America and Iran.

#### LIMITATIONS

A complete review of Iran's association with the West and of the impact of the West upon Iranian education, society, and culture is far beyond the scope of this study. Although certain background material will be given, the main purpose is to focus attention upon education in a relatively short period of time in Iran.

This historical study is limited to the American church missionaries and their educational impact on the educational programs of Iran during 1834-1925 C.E. In 1834 the first American church mission started to work in Iran, and in 1925 the Qajar dynasty ended. This period marked the rise of American church missionaries, and Iran started

a phase of Westernization.<sup>25</sup> Religious views of the American church missionaries are not considered in this study.

#### DEFINITIONS

Terms used throughout the study are defined below:

1. Persia or Iran: ~~These two names have been used to~~ designate the same country. In 1935 the Iranian government, for the sake of consistency, requested all foreign countries to use the official name of Iran.<sup>26</sup>
2. Persian or Farsi: The official and the literary language in Iran is Farsi. This is the most important of the group of languages known as Iranian, and the only one which is demonstrated by written evidence to have existed at each of the three stages, Old, Middle, and Modern. Modern Persian is a direct descendant of Pahlavi, the Middle Persian language spoken in Sassanian times, to which in Islamic times a great many Arabic words were added. Today an educated Iranian can read works written a thousand years ago without undue difficulty.<sup>27</sup>
3. Calendar: With reference to the dates given in this

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<sup>25</sup> Amin Banani, The Modernization of Iran (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> Donald N. Wilber, Iran: Past and Present (7th ed.; New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iran Today (Tehran: Information and Press Department, 1973), p. 77.

study, a note of explanation is necessary. Dates given in Christian years are an approximation of the Iranian year; that is, the Iranian year 1357 is given as 1978, although this year began on March 21, 1978, and ended on March 20, 1979.

4. Dynasty: ~~Dynasty is a succession of rulers or monarchs~~ of the same line or family and/or the period during which a dynasty rules.<sup>28</sup>

5. The use of the term "West" refers to the civilization of those western nations who also populated and civilized the western hemisphere.

6. Before Common Era (B.C.E.) = B.C. and Common Era (C.E.) = A.D.

#### SUMMARY

Many factors during 1834-1925 C.E. influenced Iran's adoption of Western educational programs. One of the factors is the American church mission. As Issa Sadiq points out, the American missionaries were the first to affect the evolution of the Iranian educational programs. But little actually is known about the topic. This study is an historical study of the American church missionaries' impact on Iranian education and uses available primary and secondary sources in the United States of America and in Iran.

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<sup>28</sup> Albert and Loy Morehead, ed., Webster Handy College Dictionary (New York: Signet and Plume Books, 1972), p. 150.

## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE RELATED TO THE STUDY

Education has always been important in all eras in Iran, ancient, medieval, and today.<sup>1</sup> In order to effect a more comprehensive interpretation of the literature pertaining to the research study under consideration, namely, the educational impact of American church missionaries on the educational programs of Iran, the review of the present literature is divided into three major periods: (1) ancient education (546 B.C.E. 'Before Common Era'-641 C.E. 'Common Era'), (2) Islamic education (642-1834 C.E.), and (3) modern or Western-type education (1834-1925 C.E.). The last period is the main concern of this chapter.

#### ANCIENT EDUCATION

The culture of ancient Persia was well integrated, particularly in the Achaemenid Empire (546-330 B.C.E.), and the Sassanian Dynasty (226-641 C.E.).<sup>2</sup> In the Achaemenids

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<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Information, The Development of Education in Iran (Tehran: Information Office Press, 1976), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Reza Arasteh, Educational and Social Awakening in Iran (2d ed.; Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1969), p. 2.

era, Persian society was organized on definite religious principles and its education based on religious sanctions. The religion of Zoroaster and the Avesta scriptures became the foundations of Persian education and civilization. The aim of education was a synthesis of piety with healthy and useful citizenship.<sup>3</sup> Another Zoroastrian work, the Pandnameh Azarbad, gives this advice: "See that your wife and children pursue knowledge and virtue. If you have young children, boys or girls, send them to school, because the torch of learning is the light and vision of the eye."<sup>4</sup> The child received his education more by practice than by instruction. Education advanced because the family accepted responsibility for child-rearing. The child performed religious duties, and the centralized state took an interest in its youth. The state and home imposed such multitudinous duties on the citizen that he had to conform to the social order.<sup>5</sup> The child was under his mother's care until he was five. After that, his formal education continued under the state. There were four groupings of students, the first from the age of five to sixteen. During this period students were instructed in reading, writing, and good habits such as the truthfulness, purity, obedience, simplicity, thrift,

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<sup>3</sup> Mehdi Nakosteen, The History and Philosophy of Education (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1965), p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> The Development of Education in Iran, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Arasteh, op. cit., p. 2.

and the hunting skills of throwing the javelin and swimming. After that he was transferred to the second group, where his education continued for ten years. Here he was taught the principles of government and justice, and given insight into various official posts and method of administration. Then he was transferred to the third group at the age of twenty-five. He was taught the specific details of military life. Some of the students were chosen further for a fourth group, to be brought up as priests and to attend to religious ceremonies. These students were also given posts as lawyers and governors.<sup>6</sup>

Through the whole process of socialization and training of youth, the state in old Iran exercised considerable power. It utilized a program of indoctrination which emphasized physical fitness, loyalty, obedience, and an unquestioning sense of duty to glorify the nation.<sup>7</sup>

The Achaemenian civilization reached a relatively advanced stage of development before it fell to the forces of Alexander in 330 B.C.E. during the Alexandrian period (330-200 B.C.E.), and after that for another 450 years (200 B.C.E.-225 C.E.), under Parthian rule, Persian culture and education were influenced considerably by Grecian thought in philosophy and science. During this period, the

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<sup>6</sup>Strabo, Geography of Strabo, Trans. H. L. Jones (8 Vols.; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, Inc., 1936), pp. 17-18, 153.

<sup>7</sup>Arasteh, op. cit., p. 6.

intellectual and artistic life of Persia did not lose its continuity.<sup>8</sup>

After 550 years of foreign rule, Persia re-established itself as a nation along Achaemenian lines in 226 C.E. by the Sassanian dynasty, which lasted 425 years, until its overthrow by the Arab Muslims in 651 C.E. Sassanian dynasty served for over four centuries as a central market of intellectual and material exchange between East and West. In the Sassanian period, the Zoroastrian church and the state were unified. The state fostered in the youth two kinds of education: (1) physical and military for health and national defense, and (2) religious and social for moral discipline and citizenship.<sup>9</sup> In this period the Academy of Jundi-Shapur was the place for higher education. The students came from different parts of the world. In this Academy, literature (the Avesta), philosophy (Zoroastrian, Hellenic, and sometimes Indian), astronomy (Persian, Hellenic, and Indian), law and government, finance, morals (Zoroastrian), theology and religion (based on the Avesta), and medicine (Persian, Hellenic, and Indian) were studied.<sup>10</sup> It was partly through Sassanian higher education that Zoroastrian skills, Indian, Greek sciences, Hellenic, and Alexandrian-Syrian thought reached the Muslims during the

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<sup>8</sup>Maneckji N. Dhalla, Zoroastrian Civilization: From the Earliest Time to the Downfall of the Last Zoroastrian Empire, 651 A.D. (Fair Lawn, New Jersey: Oxford University Press, 1922), pp. 393-399, 268.

<sup>9</sup>Nakosteen, op. cit., pp. 49-51.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

eighth and ninth centuries C.E., and, through them, reached the schoolmen in Western Europe in Latin translations of Arabic works during the 12th and 13th centuries.<sup>11</sup>

In short, education traditionally has had a prominent role in Iran's recorded history of 3000 years. Education in the Zoroasterian era was organized on religious, family, and state. The education was not restricted to the elementary level, but also included the higher branches of learning. The great Academy of Jundi-Shapur in Iran was the first important channel of preservation and eventual transmission of Hellenistic, Hindu, and Persian learning to the Western World.

#### ISLAMIC EDUCATION

This part of the study is an historical overview of the Islamic period in Iranian education which spanned twelve centuries from 642 C.E. to 1834 C.E. In 642 C.E. the Arabs conquered Iran and in 1834 C.E. the first American church mission came to Iran. Two years after they established the first modern, or Western-type, school in Iran.

The Arab conquest of 642 C.E. uprooted the earlier integrated policies, and two centuries elapsed before Persian ideas became part of the fabric of Islam.<sup>12</sup> The

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>12</sup>Arasteh, op. cit., p. 6.



simplicity of Islam and its closeness to Persian morality penetrated Persian hearts, and many aspects of it influenced educational practices.<sup>13</sup>

It took about two hundred years, however, before the Persians could recover from the impact of the astounding events and the profound changes attendant on the acceptance of Islam, and collect themselves in the context of a new mode of life. From the 9th century C.E. local dynasties began to be established on Persian soil and to provide social unity.<sup>14</sup> Iranians always conquered or absorbed their conquerers. As Avery stated, "Religion and territory might be lost or alienated, but the cohesive force of the Iranian legend remained. Iranians have the capacity to overcome disaster and maintain cultural distinction in spite of difficult transition periods."<sup>15</sup>

When the Arabs invaded the Persian empire, the Muslims, unlike the Mongolian invaders of the thirteenth century, were tolerant of the regional customs and cultures of the people they subdued. In the seventh century when the city of Jundi-Shapur surrendered to Islam, the Academy of Jundi-Shapur remained undisturbed and continued as a center of medical, scientific, and philosophic learning until the beginning of the eleventh century.<sup>16</sup> From this Academy, scholars,

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>14</sup>Peter Avery, Modern Iran (London: Ernest Benn Limited Bouverie House, 1965), p. 15.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>16</sup>Nakosteen, op. cit., pp. 116-117 and 121.

educators, and physicians went to Damascus and Baghdad and gave to Islam its first acquaintance with classical cultures. It was at the academy of Jundi-Shapur and its alumni that the first translations into Arabic, Hindu, Persian, Syrian, and Greek works began to be made, beginning a tradition that was transferred to the new Muslim capital in Baghdad.<sup>17</sup> This new learning or renaissance of translation, assimilation, and creative improvements and additions to prevailing knowledge were stimulated and furthered by the contributions of the scholars of Jundi-Shapur. It is important for historians of western education that this Academy preserved and enriched classical education and scholarship and transmitted them to western schoolmen through Latin and Hebrew translations of Arabic works.<sup>18</sup>

Though the Academy of Jundi-Shapur was active in the beginning of eleventh century it disappeared as the center of intellectual influence in Islam in the latter half of the ninth century. In thirteenth century a series of catastrophic invasions by the hordes of central Asia engaged the energies of the East and snuffed out the vigor of its culture. While the West was entering upon the Renaissance, the age of discovery and science, the East was plunging into isolation, stagnation, and fatalism.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>19</sup> Amin Banani, The Modernization of Iran (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 5.

The establishment of the Persian empire under the Safavids (1502-1736 C.E.), and the revival of Persian culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, meant renewed contact with Europe. The great Shah Abbas (1587-1629 C.E.), imported military organizers from Europe. It was during this period that ~~caravans of ambassadors and~~ merchants from England, France, Austria, Spain, and the various German states began to arrive in Persia. They were enlightened, amused, and shocked by Persians, and the Persians who came into contact with them were also enlightened, amused, and shocked by European civilization.<sup>20</sup>

Records from the Safavid Dynasty stated that by 1700 C.E., Isfahan, the capital city with a population of about 600,000, had 160 mosques, 100 maktab (schools), and 46 colleges of theology. By the Safavids integrated efforts these institutions provided an advanced program for the socialization and development of children and youth. In this period education was based on the Islamic educational system, which had a special place in education of Iran.<sup>21</sup>

#### The Islamic Educational System in Iran

The appearance of Islam in Iran in the 7th century fostered the growth of knowledge and learning. Since the Arab invasion, a system of "madreseh or maktab" (school),

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>21</sup>Arasteh, op. cit., p. 18.

which was introduced earlier under the "ulema" (the learned religious men), flourished in Iran and influenced educational practices;<sup>22</sup> yet the family and community still functioned as the primary institutions for training youth. While urban areas had some kind of the systematic education for children, ~~formal schooling in the rural areas was~~ limited.<sup>23</sup> Because of the differences between the urban and the rural education, this study dealt with these two areas separately.

#### Urban Education

Urban education related the child to the family and community. The urban child looked to his family for his basic needs and to the community for his education. "Maktabs" (schools), bazaars, and recreational institutions contributed to education in urban areas.

#### Classical Education in "Maktabs" (Schools)

The most prevalent kind of elementary education in traditional Iran was the system of "maktab", or religious school, supported by private contributions and religious foundations, and often associated with a mosque. It was the accepted schooling for both upper- and middle-class urban youth. The wealthy people often maintained private

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<sup>22</sup>The Development of Education in Iran, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

family "maktabs" in which they educated their own children and those of relatives. Girls were occasionally admitted to special classes taught by women. Parents were expected to pay whatever they could afford for the instruction of each child.<sup>24</sup>

The "maktab" system was limited in many ways. Its curriculum only included such subjects as reading, writing, and familiarity with the Koran and classical Persian texts, such as Sadi's Gulistan and Bustan, and the poems of Hafiz. The "maktab-dar" (teacher) taught in a rote manner and maintained strict discipline by applying physical punishment freely. Buildings were seldom adequate nor were classrooms conducive to study.<sup>25</sup>

In the "maktabs" there was no fixed term of study. Each "maktab-dar" (teacher) would advance his own group of pupils when he had judged them competent in theology, philosophy, literature, and Arabic.<sup>26</sup>

#### Vocational Education in Bazaars

Traditional community life was further enriched by the bazaar and its guild system. It also provided for the training of apprentices. The master closely supervised the work of the young men under him. He expected them to observe

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>25</sup>Abdolah Mustoufi, Sharh-i Zendegani-i man [My Life History] (Tehran: Kitab Furushi Elmi, 1947), pp. 297-98.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

daily prayers, attend the mosque and participate in religious ceremonies. In some trades more than others, youths traditionally followed their family's trade. Some trades accepted boys at nine years of age, others not until they were twelve or more. Oftentimes the training lasted into adulthood, particularly for those who wanted to become artists, silversmiths, goldsmiths, or carpenters. In this period of time, bazaar training fully developed the apprentice's personality and the youth patterned himself both socially and vocationally after his master. The youth acquired skill through his own mistakes and the frowns of the master. As time went on he received a raise in pay and gained promotions relative to his skill and the needs of master.<sup>27</sup>

#### Physical Education

Physical education was another aspect of medieval Persian society. Physical education began with the local games of childhood and youth and continued with the individual's participation in the "Zurkhaneh" (House of Strength).<sup>28</sup> A young man might join the "Zurkhaneh" and through a series of hierarchial steps he could eventually become a local or even national hero.<sup>29</sup> The "Zurkhanen" not only provided

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<sup>27</sup>Arasteh, op. cit., pp. 9-11.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

athletic facilities but offered religious inspiration to everyone. Members treated it as a sacred place. When they entered or left it they kissed the ground.<sup>30</sup>

Not only physical powers but moral qualities and community participation were the purpose of the "Zurkhaneh." More meaningful benefits of the "Zurkhaneh" came at a time when urban people were threatened by the loss of their own national heritage. In order to preserve it and gain some security, some Iranian people devised a program for strengthening their physical abilities, which they performed to the rhythm of religious and traditional verse. The "Zurkhaneh" also helped indoctrinate the youth into the community; it emphasized the accepted religious and social values and gave youth a series of goals by which they could gain local and national recognition.<sup>31</sup>

#### Education in Villages

The rural child got his education in many ways. Because formal schooling was limited, the real school-room remained the home and the field. Here, the young child received both vocational and character training.<sup>32</sup>

Character training developed in response to emotional ties a village child formed with different family members.

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<sup>30</sup>Hussein P. Baizaay, Tarikh-i Warzesh-i Bastani-i Iran History of Ancient sport in Iran (Tehran: 1958), Chapter 9.

<sup>31</sup>Arasteh, op. cit., pp. 14-17.

<sup>32</sup>C. J. Rochechovart, Souvenirs d'un Voyage en Persie en Trans. (Paris: Challemeil Aine Editeur, 1867), p. 109.

The child's first attachment to the mother continued to be the strongest relationship throughout life. A child experienced a more complex relationship with his father. The father seldom concerned himself with the child's upbringing until he became old enough to work in the fields. He always saw his father as the central authority in the family.<sup>33</sup>

Before the age of ten the boy had already begun to participate in male gatherings at the public bath or tea house. The girl continued in the company of her mother and other women.<sup>34</sup>

The boy's vocational education took place mostly in the fields, and the men of the village performed the role of the teacher. They first assigned him to herd the young animals of the village. Later they gave him the care of the sheep, and finally, by the age ten, they made him help harvest the crops. A girl's education centered about the house and yard. When she was very young her mother assigned her the job of chasing the chickens from their nests and collecting eggs; later she helped fetch water, bake and cook. Even before puberty she knew her household skills well. Her mother and grandmother supervised her training closely, for such skills were an asset in finding a husband.

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 111.



A girl customarily married young and went to live with her husband's family. In her new home her mother-in-law gave her further training.<sup>35</sup>

Carpet-weaving drew on the talents of the entire family. The weaver sat on the bench in front of the loom while the head of the family stood before him and in a sing-song voice called out the instructions for the pattern.<sup>36</sup>

In short, the formal schooling was very limited in the rural areas. Home and the field were the real school-room. In the urban areas, family and community were helping the city child in terms of education. Maktabas, bazaars, and recreational institutions contributed to the education in the urban areas. The main purpose of the home and the community schooling was religious and associated with the mosques. This kind of religious schooling fostered the growth of knowledge and learning after the Arab invasion in the 7th century until 1834 C.E. when the first American church mission brought Western-type education to Iran. Although the Western-type education gradually spread in Iran, the American church missions provided the spark for revitalizing traditional Iranian education.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 113-114.

## MODERN OR WESTERN-TYPE EDUCATION IN IRAN

In this part the main purpose is to focus attention upon a relatively short period in the long history of Iran which marked the rise of the modern, or Western-type education during the years 1834-1925 C.E. in Iran.

The background material such as the role of western power politics during the Ghajar dynasty, the Nestorian and Armenian Christians, circumstances in the 19th century in Iran, and finally, the rise of modern or Western-type education are included in this section but the emphasis is on the educational impact of American church missionaries on the educational programs of Iran.

The Role of Western Power Politics  
in the Ghajar Period (1787-1925 C.E.)

The story of Western power politics in Iran is not directly within the scope of the present study; but it played so decisive a role in molding Iranian attitudes toward the West, and in providing the spark for Iranian national education, that at least an outline is necessary. In the 19th century, power politics was practiced in Iran only by Russia and Britain. Other nations either did not have any direct interest in Iran, or Russia and Britain did not allow them to have such interests.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Banani, op. cit., p. 8.

The Ghajar dynasty ruled Iran (1787-1925 C.E.) under very difficult circumstances.<sup>38</sup> The Western influences that had been filtering into Iran since the sixteenth century finally gained ascendancy, and the country underwent a phase of Westernization.<sup>39</sup>

When Iran was defeated by Russia in 1828, she lost her traditional status among the community of nations. Her sovereignty became contingent upon British and Russian interest. Since that time every international event has affected political life in Iran.<sup>40</sup>

After 1828 a frontier between Russia and Iran did exist, but for the most part it was only a geographic line. The court in Tehran was powerless to take action, even in internal affairs, without the approval of the Russian ambassador. Had it not been for British skill in maintaining the balance of power in Iran, even her nominal sovereignty could not have lasted long. But beyond Iran lay India, and this meant the British had to do everything to keep Russia away.<sup>41</sup> The discovery of oil in Iran intensified the rivalry between Britain and Russia, and resulted in the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907. In order to preserve peace and freedom for the rest of the world, the two powers decided to divide up the sphere of influence of

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<sup>38</sup>Sadiq, op. cit., p. 274.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>40</sup>Arasteh, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>41</sup>George N. Curzon, Persia and the Persian Question Vol. I (2d ed.; New York: Branes and Noble, 1966), p. 20.

Iran! They divided the country into respective spheres of influence in which they gave each other carte blanche. It was during the 19th century that Western influence penetrated beyond ambassadorial and court circles and began to be felt in the life of the nation.<sup>42</sup>

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#### Nestorians and Armenians in Iran

The classical writings and teachings of the Greek philosophers and scientists, and the Neoplatonic learning and mysticism, reached the Muslims largely by way of Nestorians and Jacobite teachers and Zoroastrian scholars of the Academy of Jundi-shapur. The Nestorian Christians were intelligent and active-minded. Their level of general education was at a much higher level than the Latin-speaking Christians of the West.<sup>43</sup> The Nestorian Christians were tolerated by Islam until the ascendancy of the Turks in the eleventh century.<sup>44</sup> Nestorians were the intellectual backbone of the Persian world. They had preserved much of the work of Aristotle and the Neoplatonians; and their writing was translated into Syriac, and later into Arabic which became the heritage of the Muslim world.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>43</sup>H. G. Wells, The New and Revised Outline of History (New York: Garden City Books, 1931), p. 629.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 630.

<sup>45</sup>De Lacy O'Leary, Arabic Thought and its Place in History (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1939), p. 32.

The Assyrian church was founded in the first century of the Christian era. The Assyrian church separated from the Roman church in 451 C.E. and therefore was known as the Nestorian church in memory of its great leader, Nestorius.<sup>46</sup>

The tolerant attitude of Persians toward foreigners encouraged Christians to go to Iran, even as early as 334 C.E. In the fifth century the persecuted Nestorians fled to Iran from the Roman Empire. The Nestorian church was animated by a strong and effectual missionary spirit, sending out missionaries not only throughout Iran but through central Asia to far away China, and down into the west coast of India.<sup>47</sup>

The Dominicans established a mission among the Armenians in 1320. They were followed by various Catholic orders, the Jesuits, Capuchians, Augustinians, and Carmelites in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>48</sup> In this era Shah Abas's accepting attitude further encouraged Christian activity in Iran. However, a well-established government made it difficult for missionaries to gain any real foothold

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<sup>46</sup> John Elder, Mission to Iran (Tehran: The Literature Committee of the Church Council of Iran, undated), pp. 7-8.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> S. G. Wilson, Persia: Western Mission (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1896), pp. 347-48.

in Iran.<sup>49</sup> For this reason extensive missionary work had to wait until the nineteenth century when a weak central government was faced with demands for independence.<sup>50</sup>

The Christians lived securely in Iran which they loved.<sup>51</sup> But, their condition at the time of the arrival of the first American church mission in 1834, as John Elder pointed out, was sad. The once glowing light of education had almost entirely gone out for the Nestorians and the Armenians. It is probable that the total number of Assyrians in Iran, Turkey and Mesopotamia at that time was about 127,000. Among all of this large nation there were about 40 men able to read, and one lone woman.<sup>52</sup> These Christians, once famous for their scholars, who translated Greek philosophy and science into Arabic, had been living for centuries among Kurds and Turkish-speaking Persians. They spoke Kurdish or Azari Turkish as a second language, but could not communicate with Persians and Arabs in their tongue.<sup>53</sup>

Families were large, numbering from 10 to 40. It was the custom when sons married to raise their families, for a time at least, under the parental roof. Health

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<sup>49</sup>Arasteh, op. cit., p. 159.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>51</sup>John Joseph, The Nestorians and their Muslim Neighbors (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 209.

<sup>52</sup>Elder, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>53</sup>Joseph, op. cit., p. 218.

conditions were of the worst. The houses were infested with vermin. Vaccination was unknown until the missionaries introduced it, so infant mortality was very high. Iranian Christians were at the time a nation of drinkers. Wine was the common drink. Nearly all forms of business and industry were suspended in the winter time, and the time was spent in heavy drinking. Many lives were lost as a result of alcoholism.<sup>54</sup>

It is obvious that such an illiterate nation would be prey to a thousand fears and superstitions and would lack any knowledge of the actual teachings of the Christian faith. Their relation consisted entirely in the carrying out of certain forms and ceremonies. There were many saints' days. The people would gather in the yard of some building to honor an ancient saint, and would spend several days in eating, drinking, and dancing.<sup>55</sup>

#### The Rise of Modern or Western-type Education

Since the education was important for the Zoroastrians, the Muslims, and also the small minority of Christians, the social and political climate in Iran was favorable to the coming of American church missions.<sup>56</sup> In the year 1832

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<sup>54</sup>Elder, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>56</sup>Ministry of Information, The Development of Education in Iran (Tehran: Information Office Press, 1976), p. 6.

Smith and Dwight were sent out by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to survey the Near East and to report the opportunities for missionary services as they then existed. This mission travelled through Syria, Armenia, and Persia. They remained in the city of Urumiah for several weeks, ~~meeting the Assyrian Bishops and visiting~~ many of the Assyrian villages.

Speaking of Assyrians, Smith pointed out, "I see that this field is white and ready for the harvest. In all my journey I have seen no people as willing to accept the gospel as the Assyrians of Persia. It is a good field for the work."<sup>57</sup>

The first American church mission, the congregation-  
alists (The American Board in Boston), selected Urumiah in Azarbaijan (North West of Iran), as the site of their mission. In August, 1834, Reverend Justin Parkins was assigned to direct its activities, and a year later Asahel Grant joined him to be his medical assistant. They began to construct a church, schools, and a hospital, which together became the first permanent Christian mission in Iran.<sup>58</sup>

Urumiah was particularly favored as a starting point because of the large number of Nestorians and Armenians there.

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<sup>57</sup>Elder, op. cit., p. 7

<sup>58</sup>The Development of Education in Iran, op. cit.,  
p. 6.



There was a definite need for education which would also serve to spread the Gospel and win young people to Protestantism.<sup>59</sup> The Presbyterian mission, in describing Perkins' early work, stated:

The educational task, therefore, as Dr. Perkins saw it, was to reduce modern Syriac to writing; translate the Scriptures into that language; teach the young priests and bishops of the church to read these scriptures, expound them and live them; develop a literature for the church and teach the whole people to use that literature.<sup>60</sup>

As far back as 1835 the British Minister had warned the first American missionaries to come to Persia of "the indispensable necessity of avoiding interference with the religious belief of the Muhammedan population."<sup>61</sup> Yet that was what, by the very nature of their calling, missionaries most wanted to do.<sup>62</sup>

The aim of Christian missionaries was to invite every nation, tongue, and people to Christianity. Their profound conviction that they had a divine mission had given great impetus to their work; it had literally reached the ends of the earth. It was this sense of obligation that caused them to travel to every part of the globe. There was not a continent where Christian missionaries, teachers,

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<sup>59</sup> Arasteh, op. cit., p. 158.

<sup>60</sup> Board of Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. A Century of Missionary Work in Iran (Persia). 1834-1934. (Bierut: American Press, 1935), p. 74.

<sup>61</sup> Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-39. I Series, Vol. IV, p. 1121.

<sup>62</sup> Denis Wright, The English Among the Persian (London: Morrison and Gilble Ltd., 1977), p. 120.

and preachers were not at work preaching the gospel.<sup>63</sup>

There are many jokes of the folk-lore category about foreign influences in Iran. A popular one concerns a missionary on the eve of his departure from Iran. He regretfully confided to his Persian aide that he had truly failed, for in forty years of service he had succeeded in converting only three Persians to Christianity. "But, sir," the aide protested, "You did very well. For 1300 years Islam has been in this country and not one is a Muslim!"<sup>64</sup>

In 1889, Curzon, an English reporter for Times Magazine, reported that though the missionaries spread education, displayed charity, and gave free medical assistance, they had not been able to make a single convert from the Muslim religion.<sup>65</sup> Curzon pointed out:

I do not hesitate to say that the prodigious expenditure of money, of honest effort, and of sacrificing toil that has been showered upon that country has met with a wholly inadequate return. I have myself often inquired for, but have never seen, a converted Mussulman (I exclude, of course those derelicts or orphans of Mussulman parents who are brought up from childhood in Christian school). Nor I am surprised at even the most complete demonstration of failure.<sup>66</sup>

Despite opposition to the mission's conversion activities and also from Nestorian patriarchs who felt that their

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<sup>63</sup>Burton L. Goddard, ed., The Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Missions (Camden, New Jersey: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967), p. 583.

<sup>64</sup>Arasteh, op. cit., p. 155.

<sup>65</sup>George N. Curzon, Persia and the Persian Question Vol. I (2d ed.; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), p. 504.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 508.

authority was being challenged, the number of missions continued to expand in the Urumiah region so that by 1871 there were forty-eight mission stations in various villages. Missionary activities were expanded to other regions in northern Iran in the 1870's and 1880's and their protection became a primary responsibility of the United States Legation when Iranian-American relations were established in 1883.<sup>67</sup>

Beside the Presbyterian church missionaries, the Seventh-Day Adventist missionaries were also involved in education in Iran. This church did not have the same experience as the Presbyterian missionaries. Early Adventist school was established in 1911 in Iran. The Adventist education was expanded in many of the villages in and around Urumieh, later, Tabriz, then Arak, Hamadan, and Tehran. Adventist schools were evangelically oriented and they contributed to Iranian educational programs.<sup>68</sup>

The American impact to Iranian education, began by the first missionaries, continued into the 20th century. In 1915, the Presbyterian mission purchased a 44-acre site of land in Tehran. On this land the American (Alborz) college was built. Opened in 1925, it held a charter from

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<sup>67</sup>The Development of Education in Iran, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-7.

the Board of Regents of the state of New York, and thus enjoyed the status of an accredited liberal arts college. Departments of chemistry, biology, commerce, philosophy, and the social sciences were staffed by American-trained faculty. The distinguishing choice of this Presbyterian college was its president and headmaster of 41 years, Samuel Martin Jordan, who shared in the education of many of the present generation of Iranian leaders.<sup>69</sup>

Beside American church missionaries and their impact on the educational programs of Iran, there have been other church missions from European countries which affected Iranian education. French and English missions have also been important in terms of education in Iran.

French Missionaries: In 1840, French Catholic missionaries (French Lazarists), came to the northern community of Urumiah. They established St. Luit School in 1861, and St. Joseph School in 1876, both in Tehran. The Association of St. Vincent-de-Paul opened many other schools in other cities in 1866. The association of Alians-de-France maintained a school named Alians in Tehran in 1900.<sup>70</sup> Although French missionaries, like American missionaries, did not directly promote education, they influenced Persian education through various cultural ties.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., pp. 7-8.

<sup>70</sup>Sadiq, op. cit., p. 356.

<sup>71</sup>Arasteh, op. cit., p. 156.

English Missionary: Among the British missions which worked in Iran, the Church Missionary Society made the most progress in educational and medical work. By an early agreement with the American mission, they confined their activities to the south of Iran and established their first center at Isfahan in 1869.<sup>72</sup> The Association of Stewart Memorial College maintained a college in Tehran in 1906. They eventually spread their activities to Shiraz, Yazed, and Kerman.<sup>73</sup> Another British society, the London Society for Jews, worked in Hamadan, Isfahan, and Tehran. In Tehran the society established a school for boys and one for girls.<sup>74</sup>

Because the impact of American church missions on educational programs of Iran is the focus of this study, this brief explanation of European missions should be sufficient. Beside American and European church missions and their impact on the educational programs of Iran, there have been other factors which have affected educational progress in Iran. Some of the more important factors influencing education in Iran are:

1. Study Abroad. In the early part of nineteenth century the Iranian government began sending students to Europe. In 1810, the first of these students went to

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>73</sup>Sadiq, op. cit., p. 356.

<sup>74</sup>Arasteh, op. cit., pp. 157-58.

England for a medical career. In 1818, five students followed them to study modern sciences. In 1844, another group of five went to France, and they were followed in 1861 by 42 top students from the first graduating class of Dar al-Funun (Polytechnic School). In 1911, thirty more students went to Europe to study military science, agriculture, and various social sciences. Most of these students were financed by the Iranian government. In 1918, about 500 Iranian students were studying in foreign countries, 200 of them were in France, 33 in England, 9 in Germany, and the rest in Switzerland and other countries.<sup>75</sup>

2. Elitism. The Iranian students who had been educated in Europe and later on in America were more responsible than any single institution or group of people for bringing Western influences into Iran. These students were too young to have much acquaintance with Persian culture traditions. The best jobs went to those who had been educated abroad; if they came from influential families and were loyal to the political system, they could become a minister, under secretary, general director of a ministry, legislator, ambassador or cultural attache. Family position, more than professional ability, determined their position.<sup>76</sup> They were mostly sons of the ruling class.

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<sup>75</sup>Arasteh, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

They tried to bring Western fashions in everything from dress to food to manners, and even to the frequent use of European words, construction, and pronunciation in Persian speech.<sup>77</sup>

The intellectual atmosphere in Iran at the end of the nineteenth century, which was so receptive to the ways of the West, was created by a very few people; yet their influence was very great. All the political and physical changes were taking place against a background of intense intellectual curiosity and avid desire for Westernization.<sup>78</sup>

Transferring western European social conceptions influenced the mind of some Iranian elite. But the contrast between classes was none the less basically alien to the Muslim-Persian social structure.<sup>79</sup>

One of the characteristics of Muslim society is mobility, particularly in the social ideals of the Shi'it sect to which 94 percent of Iranians belong. It was not a man's birth that counted so much as his ability. A clever man could ascend to the highest degrees of the religious hierachy, which was in fact generally filled by men of the people. A great measure of the influence these clerics had arose because they could claim, and still do, close contact

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<sup>77</sup>Banani, op. cit., pp. 22-27.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>79</sup>Avery, op. cit., p. 47.

with the common people and that they were thus better able than others to gauge popular reaction. The Shi'ites formed a kind of elite which were mostly conservative and traditionally religious.<sup>80</sup>

The largest class in Iranian society, the peasantry, ~~lived much as they had for centuries.~~ Some villagers living by main roads had come in contact with outward signs of Western civilization; and a few items of Western origin had found their way into the homes of the more prosperous peasants. The large number of tribal population of Iran (in 1921, nearly 15 percent of the Iran population), remained completely untouched by modern advances of any kind.<sup>81</sup>

Among the merchant class the influence of the West was very slight. They formed an influential minority in Iran. They have prestige and power; but despite their commercial dealing with Europe, they were much less affected by Westernization than the city-dwelling landed aristocracy.<sup>82</sup>

It was a small, heterogeneous, active, articulate, and constantly growing class that spread Westernism in Iran. A new kind of western European elitism emerged in Iran. These new elites stressed secular interests, Western acculturation, and academic achievement. They were

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>81</sup>Banani, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., pp. 29-30.



intellectually and socially oriented to Western values, but emotionally tied to tradition.<sup>83</sup>

An important aspect of stratification that tended to develop with processes of Westernization was the growing dissociation between elite and broad status group, and different elites themselves.<sup>84</sup> In 1920, the European and Iranian educated elites were a minority, but they were both the voice and the political conscience of Iran. The impact of the West on Iran was felt on two planes, the material and the nonmaterial. In the early days of Westernization in Iran the two were not clearly differentiated. Banani, an Iranian scholar, says:

There is a fable about a crow who was so impressed by the graceful gait of a partridge that he set himself to imitate it. After long months of practice he had not learned the way of the partridge, but he had forgotten the walk of a crow.<sup>85</sup>

The majority of Westernizers wished to make a distinction between the useful application of Western technology and the blind adoption of Western customs. Banani pointed out, "We must learn their Western science, their technology, and emulate their sense of lawfulness, responsibility, and initiative. Otherwise, any ape can learn their dances."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>84</sup>D. Bell, "Modernity and Mass Society: On the Variation of Cultural Experience," Studies in Public Communication, 4 (1962), pp. 33-34.

<sup>85</sup>Banani, op. cit., p. 146.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

3. Dar al-Funun (Polytechnic School). The founding of Dar al-Funun in Tehran in 1851 represented a major landmark. This was the first Western-type school to be established by Amir Kabir, the Prime Minister of Nasser ed-Din Shah Ghajar.<sup>87</sup> The key policy of the Amir Kabir was the encouragement of industrial development. This first effort in the 19th century was in part a reaction to the expansion of European goods and influence into the Iranian market. Moreover, Amir Kabir facilitated economic growth by sending abroad for training interested and enthusiastic individuals. The policies and methods employed by Amir Kabir led to the social acceptability of many new and useful innovations into Iran.<sup>88</sup>

Dar al-Funun also facilitated the recruitment of qualified military and civilian personnel. This was a polytechnic school which offered a variety of disciplines: artillery, infantry, military, engineering, medicine, physics, and minerology. While the faculty was composed almost entirely of Austrian professors, the spirit of the institution was French as was the language of instruction.<sup>89</sup> It corresponded to a French Lycee' in that it included secondary education as well as rudimentary higher education.

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>88</sup>The Development of Education in Iran, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>89</sup>Arasteh, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

Dar al-Funun students and the alumni suffered under a stigma of social and professional inferiority, because any degree or even record of attendance from a European institution automatically carried social, economic, and psychological value.<sup>90</sup>

~~An elitist institution, the core of its students~~ was chosen from the ranks of the aristocracy, landlords, and high government officials. Tuition was free and students received small subsidies along with meals and clothing. Students were expected to have mastery of the classics before entering. Six years was the normal length of study during which students received practical and technical training.<sup>91</sup>

Dar al-Funun was the first successful endeavor in modernizing the structure of Iranian education. Among the achievements of its graduates were the setting up of the first telegraph wire in Iran and the publication of Iran's first official newspaper. Dar al-Funun continued to flourish until the end of the 19th century at which time the ruling Ghajar monarch, Nasser ed-din Shah, lost his initial interest in Westernization and became concerned with the possibility of student unrest. Although its status was later changed to that of a high school, Dar al-Funun continued to exert much influence in Iran through its graduates,

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<sup>90</sup>Banani, op. cit., p. 100

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

many of whom continued their study in abroad. During its forty years of existence, Dar-al-Funun graduated 1100 students. Most of these students went abroad and were finally employed by government services, generally with the help of family connections. Those without family connections entered educational work in the hope of getting administrative positions.<sup>92</sup>

From the establishment of Dar al-Funun to the early part of the 20th century, five other specialized institutions were established in Iran: two military colleges (1883, 1886), a school of languages (1873), agriculture (1900), and political science (1901). The function of the latter was to educate foreign service officers who would then serve without pay for their first three years of duty. This condition ensured that student recruitment would be from the upper social classes. The five-year course of study included the pursuit of various subjects including Islamic jurisprudence, history, mathematics, and international law. The final two years were devoted to the in-depth study of a specialized field such as international, administrative or commercial law; taxation, jurisprudence or logic.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>Arasteh, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

<sup>93</sup>The Development of Education in Iran, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

4. Administration and School Law. Interest in educational reform also increased towards the end of the 19th century, culminating in the creation in 1898 of the Council for National Schools. This was the first attempt made to initiate a modern school network and to restructure primary and secondary schooling in Iran.<sup>94</sup>

The early part of the 20th century further witnessed a series of new laws concerning education. In articles 18 and 19 of the Constitutional Law of 1907, modern education for all Iranians was made compulsory and the Ministry of Science and Art was established to control all schools including religious institutions. By this action the government, for the first time in history, accepted the responsibility for educating its citizens.<sup>95</sup>

Three years later the Ministry of Education was reorganized and legislation was passed stressing the need for compulsory elementary education and advocating the collection of educational statistics, adequate teacher training, adult education, study abroad, and the establishment of libraries, museums and institutes. The Fundamental Law of the Ministry of Education (1911) reaffirmed these principles and in addition established a comprehensive network of government-financed public schools, and called for the free

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<sup>94</sup>Arasteh, op. cit., pp. 34, 69, and 222.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., pp. 222-233.

education of all children unable to afford tuition.<sup>96</sup>

The public enthusiastically embraced this reforming legislation. Parents became staunch supporters of the new institutions which provided their children with practical and useful education.<sup>97</sup>

Public schools grew in size and number. By 1910, 10,531 children were enrolled in 113 elementary schools, of which one-third were girls' schools. Elementary education made its greatest strides in the cities of Iran. The creation of schools in the city of Isfahan between 1906 and 1922 is one example. Elementary schools continued to spring up in other provincial cities. However, during World War I, educational achievements slowed in both the urban and rural areas.<sup>98</sup> Although progress had been made during the first two decades of the 20th century, a modern, comprehensive system of education in Iran remained but an unfulfilled dream in the 1920's.<sup>99</sup>

#### SUMMARY

The literature reviewed for the present study provided substantial information concerning ancient through modern or Western-type education in Iran. This review showed

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<sup>96</sup>The Development of Education in Iran, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.

that education has always been important in all eras in Iran.

Traditionally, education has had a prominent role in Iran's recorded history of 3,000 years. Education in the Zoroastrian era was not restricted to the elementary level, but also included the higher branches of learning. In addition to ordinary schools, there were important scientific and cultural centers of education in Iran such as the famous Jundi-Shapur University.

The appearance of Islam in Iran in the 7th century fostered the growth of knowledge and learning. In old and medieval Iran, custom and religious law were the prevailing systems that influenced individual and group behavior. They also dictated educational policy. At the elementary level, schooling was privately directed by family and community interests, but in the seventh century mosques were built in Iran and became the chief centers of elementary schooling. Secondary education received humanistic and religious support through foundations maintained by wealthy individuals who endowed them with the proceeds of their property to be used for charitable and other purposes. This type of institution flourished during the 11th to 13th centuries and later during the Safavid times when security and law prevailed.

It should be remembered, however, that in those days, because of the structure of Iranian society and the

inter-relationship of the various classes, the education of children was not universal. Education was only available to the children of the privileged classes. Nevertheless, education was widespread and wherever there was a fire-temple or a mosque there was also a school nearby.

~~In the madreseh (school) there was no fixed term of~~ study. Each master or teacher would advance his own group of pupils when he had judged them competent in theology, philosophy, literature, and Arabic. To have received the classical education of the madreseh was considered prestigious indeed. However, in time these religious schools failed to provide students with the requisite classical background.

In the 19th century, Western institutions were admired by the Iranian ruling class. The orientation of Iranian education experienced changes which were largely the result of Iran's contact with the West.

The European and American missionary schools provided a powerful incentive for the Iranian government to establish its own schools and improve its standards of education. French missionaries established some schools in Iran but did not directly promote education. France influenced Persian education through various cultural ties. The British missions also maintained some schools in the south of Iran.

The impact of American missionaries on Iranian



education, which is the concern of this study, dates back to the 19th century. In 1834, Reverend Justin Parkins and his wife arrived in Iran to begin construction of a church, hospital, and school, which together became the first permanent Christian mission in Iran. The Mission of the Nestorians (later called Mission to Iran), was opened in 1835 by the Parkins and Isahel Grant, who represented the Board of Foreign Missions of the American Presbyterian Church. The mission served Nestorians and Armenians who lived in Urumiah (north west of Iran). The elementary schools were provided by American church missionaries in that region and later on in other areas. By providing medical care, education and spiritual guidance, the mission created a favorable impression of Americans in Iran and laid the foundation for expanded contact and establishment of Iranian-American relations in 1883.

The impact of American church missionaries on Iranian education, begun by the first missionaries, continued into the 20th century. They educated many of the present generation of Iranian leaders.

There have been other factors which have affected educational programs in Iran. The Iranian government, by sending students to Europe, brought the Western European social conceptions to Iran. The new elitism stressed secular interests, western acculturation, and academic achievement.

In 1851, Amir Kabir established an institution of higher learning in Tehran. He succeeded in setting up a polytechnic school, Dar al-Funun. Because of Anglo-Russian rivalry of interests in Iran, Amir Kabir sought educational assistance from Austria. Dar al-Funun was followed by the other institutions which all together affected Iranian Educational programs. The fundamental law of the Ministry of Education in 1911 established a comprehensive network of government-financed public schools.

Educational progress in Iran is continuing. There are many factors which have affected education in Iran. These factors are: heritage of ancient education, Islamic education, and modern or Western-type education. The modern or Western-type education started in the first half of the 19th century, a relatively a short period in the long history of Iran. During the 19th and 20th century, Iran has progressed more than during the previous thousands of years. In this progress the Mission has had its share and borne its part.

## Chapter III

### PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

#### Overview

The growth and development of urbanization, modernization, materialism, and new technological processes have changed the aspects of the life of Iranians. One important result of this change is attributable to education.<sup>1</sup> The American church missionaries were the first foreign influence to affect the Iranian educational programs.<sup>2</sup>

This historical study was conducted by the investigator in order to provide a data-base, the accessible population, and pertinent documents related to the impact of the educational practices in the American mission schools on the Iranian educational program in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This chapter will also discuss the procedures and method used in developing the questionnaire and gathering data.

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<sup>1</sup>Issa Sodiq, History of Education in Iran (Trans.) (3d ed.; Tehran: Teacher Training College Press, 1963), p. 356.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 357.

## Population

The objectives were accomplished by surveying all accessible American church missionaries who directly had worked in education in Iran. The generalizations from this study apply specifically to the population as defined but may have applicability to other church missionaries in Iran.

## Data Collection Procedures

The data were collected by the questionnaire method, personal and/or telephone interviews and correspondence, and the investigation of publications. The details concerning the relevant aspects of the information-gathering process are organized under the headlines as enumerated above.

## Instrumentation and Data

The questionnaire concerns the educational impact of American church missionaries on the educational programs of Iran (1834 - 1925 C.E.). The development of the questionnaire resulted in an instrument composed of three divisions: The first division with five questions contains general questions such as name, address, etc. The second division with eight questions focuses on initial questions such as the years of being in Iran, for which church did he work, and etc. Finally, the third part with ten major

questions was related to education. See Appendix A for a copy of the instrument. The initial questionnaire was reviewed and discussed with two faculty members of the school of education at the University of the Pacific, Stockton, California. The initial questionnaire had twenty items. The professors added five items and eliminated two. The final questionnaire had twenty-three items and provision for comments and suggestions. The third part of the questionnaire containing educationally related questions was open ended for the purpose of getting more information.

#### Personal and/or Telephone Interview and Correspondence

A personal contact was made with the Reverend Allen H. Swan at the Presbyterian Church in Stockton, California. The Reverend Swan suggested a resource person, the Reverend John A. Watson, who had been thirty-six years as a church missionary and educator in Iran. Reverend Watson and his wife are living in Modesto, California. The investigator met the Reverend Watson and his wife a day after his 90th birthday. After the meeting, Reverend Watson sent a list of eight names and addresses of people who have served as church missionaries and educators in Iran. The seven former missionaries answered the questionnaire fully and precisely. One questionnaire was returned to sender because of the unknown address.

One of the former missionaries suggested three names to whom to send the questionnaires. The investigator

called all the former missionaries and requested additional names.

The investigator realized that beside the Presbyterian mission, there had been the Seventh-Day Adventist mission in Iran too. A personal contact was made with Mr. Kenneth Samuel Oster in Riverside, California. He speaks Persian, "Farsi," like a native. He spent 57 years of his 59 years of age in various positions including principal of the Adventist Academy in Iran. After that telephone interview, Mr. Oster sent a list of twelve names and addresses of those people from the Seventh-Day Adventists who have served as church missionaries and educators in Iran. The six former missionaries answered the questionnaire. One questionnaire was returned to sender because of the unknown address. Finally, the total population of the former missionaries from the Presbyterian and the Seventh-Day Adventist churches who have been in Iran and answered the questionnaire was sixteen. Also two personal interviews were made by phone and personal contact.

#### Publications

Books, periodicals, magazines, microfilms, Union Theological Seminary Library in New York, and other libraries in the United States of America and Iran have been used. Through library loan the investigator conducted most of the data. A Search of the Automated Information Retrieval Services of the University of California at Davis (ERIC) was

another source which showed that little work had been done on the impact of American missionaries in Iran. A limited number of historical records exist on the growth of Western education in Iran. The few written reports which mentioned the impact of American Church missionaries have given relatively little information.

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### Summary

To gather data relevant to the purpose of the study, "The Impact of American Church Missionaries on the Educational Programs of Iran Questionnaire" was developed and validated by a panel of University of the Pacific faculty members. Some of the questionnaires were administered individually and some sent by mail to twenty-five former American Church Missionaries who have been involved in education in Iran. Sixteen of them answered the questionnaire. The data was gathered during the winter of 1979 throughout the United States of America.

## Chapter IV

### ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

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#### Introduction

This study was primarily designed to investigate the impact of American Church missionaries on the Iranian educational programs in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The American Church missionaries were the first foreign influence to affect the Iranian educational programs.

Twenty-five former American Church missionaries in Iran from the Presbyterian Church and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church were the accessible population in the United States of America. Sixteen of the former missionaries participated in the data collection. The data gathered for the study were obtained through the questionnaire method and personal and/or telephone interviews with two of the former missionaries.

This chapter presents the results of the investigation and an analysis of the data which was collected by the questionnaires and the interviews. It will examine the relationship between several independent variables and responses to the questionnaire. The results are organized and presented in two divisions: (1) The sample, and (2) The analysis



of information related to education. It is important to understand that this study had some limitations which must be considered.

#### Limitations

There were three limitations to this study: (1) Age of the respondents, (2) the missionary point of view, which does not include responses from Iranian respondents, and (3) the small sample. The discussion of these limitations follows.

First is age of the respondents. More than 80 percent (13 of 16) of the respondents were more than 61 years old. Age may be a factor affecting the accuracy of the results.

Second, responses are limited to one point of view. This study was limited to the opinions of the former American church missionaries in Iran. The results are not balanced because Iranian views are not represented at all in this investigation. Therefore, this is a one-sided view of the impact of American church missionaries on the educational programs of Iran.

Third, the sample is small. The respondents were sixteen accessible former American church missionaries in Iran now living in the United States. The sample may not be representative of the whole American church missionary population.

In contrast to the above three limitations, there

is a factor which may increase the validity of this study. This factor is the kind of experiences the respondents had. More than 55 percent of the respondents had been in Iran more than eleven years; one of them was born and reared in Iran, and another spent 57 years of his 59 years in Iran.

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### The Sample

The questionnaire<sup>1</sup> used to collect data for this study contained eight items which pertained to the background and general information of the sample. The part focused on initial questions such as age, sex, experience, religion, area of Iran the missionaries served, and their involvement in the area of education in Iran. Tables 1 to 3 show these independent variables, their frequencies, and their percentages. Analysis of these tables will be discussed in connection with each table.

Thirteen of the sixteen respondents were male and three of them were female. All of the female missionaries belonged to the Presbyterian church. Almost all of the respondents served in urban areas, with only one of them having served in a combination of urban and rural areas.

Table 1 shows that the former missionaries from the Presbyterian Church in Iran are older than those from the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Iran. The age of former missionaries from the Presbyterian Church varied from 61 to 90 years. The age of former missionaries from the

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix A.

Table 1  
Age and Religion of the Former Church Missionaries in Iran

Age in Years	Presbyterian Frequency	7th-Day Adventist Frequency	Total	Percentage
Less than 60	-	3	3	18.75
61 - 70	2	3	5	31.25
71 - 80	4	-	4	25.00
81 - 90	4	-	4	25.00
Total	10	6	16	100.00

Seventh-Day Adventist Church averaged less than 70 years.

In reference to Table 2, the respondents from the Presbyterian Church had more years of experience in Iran than the respondents from the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Only one respondent from the Seventh-Day Adventist Church had over fifty years experience in Iran; the remainder were there between one and ten years. Respondents from the Presbyterian Church were in Iran from one to over fifty years.

Table 3 shows that only one of the respondents from the Seventh-Day Adventist Church was not involved in education. The other Seventh-Day Adventists and all former missionaries from the Presbyterian Church were involved in education.

#### The Analysis of Information Related to Educational Programs of Iran

In reviewing the information given by the respondents, it became evident that the opinions expressed had no apparent relationship to the previous independent variables present. There were two homogeneous independent variables that could be treated equally. These two were: (1) Almost all of the respondents did serve in an urban area, and (2) almost all of them were involved in education. In contrast, these two independent variables and the others were different but still could be treated as a single group. The questionnaire item twenty, and four of the respondents from

Table 2  
Years in Iran and Religion of the Former Church

Years in Iran	Presbyterian Frequency	7th-Day Adventist Frequency	Total	Percentage
1 - 10	2	5	7	43.75
11 - 20	2	-	2	12.5
21 - 30	2	-	2	12.5
31 - 40	1	-	1	6.25
41 - 50	2	-	2	12.5
51 and over	1	1	2	12.5
Total	10	6	16	100.00

Table 3

Involvement in Education and Religion of the  
Former Missionaries in Iran<sup>a</sup>

Involvement in Education	Presbyterian Frequency	7th-Day Adventist Frequency	Total	Percentage
Yes	10	5	15	93.75
No	--	1	1	6.25
Total	10	6	16	100.00

<sup>a</sup>This means teaching or administration in a missionary school.

different independent variable categories, were randomly selected as an example, to rationalize the use of this kind of treatment.

When asked, "Would an educational system building on Iranian culture be more beneficial to Iranian people in terms of educational goals than an educational system built on an introduced culture?", the respondents in spite of their age, sex, religion, and experience answered about the same. The answers and the information about these four respondents were mentioned in the following table.

Table 4

Sex, Religion, Age, and Experience of  
the Four Former Missionaries in Iran

Respondent Number <sup>a</sup>	Sex	Religion	Age in Years	Years of Experience
4	Male	Presbyterian	85	32
5	Female	Presbyterian	69	10
6	Male	Presbyterian	89	18
12	Male	Seventh-Day Adventist	45	5

<sup>a</sup> Respondents have been numbered one through sixteen. The comments by specific respondents are identified by the number assigned the respondent.

Respondent number 4 answered, "Iran has a rich literature and culture which were taught and emphasized in all mission schools."

Respondent number 5 answered:

We focused on enhancing the students appreciation of the Iranian cultural heritage. All students were required to follow a core curriculum for four years--embracing the whole range of Persian language, literature, history, art, etc.

Respondent number 6 answered:

What do you mean by 'Iranian culture'? If it is basically Shiah, Islam as represented by the Qom School of Theology, almost any 'introduced educational system' is better...

Respondent number 12 answered, "The culture must remain the same. It is wrong to try to introduce a new culture or demand a change to a foreign culture."

It is interesting to note that respondent number 6 is similar in age as respondent number 4. They both are of the same sex, and from the Presbyterian church. Also their experiences were relatively similar but their perspectives toward item 20 were different. Respondents number 4, 5, and 12 were from different experiences. But over-all their perspectives about item 20 were similar. Although the respondents had different points of view about their work and impact on educational programs in Iran, they can be treated as a single group for the main purpose of this study.

The questionnaire further contained nine items which pertained to education. These questions were grouped in three areas: (1) Aim of American church missionaries and



their work on Iranian education. This part included items 16, 18, and 19 of the questionnaire. (2) Educational impact of American church missionaries on Iran. (3) Evaluation of the impact. This part included items 20 and 21 of the questionnaire.

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A. Aim of American Church Missionaries and their Work on Iranian Education<sup>2</sup>

This part analyzes the answers of the respondents in items sixteen, eighteen, and nineteen of the questionnaire. It is appropriate here to understand the aim of missionaries for working abroad. The American church missionaries went to Iran for the purpose of converting Muslims to Christianity. How successful they were is the subject of this section.

When asked, "Were the educational efforts of American church missionaries oriented to secular or evangelical education?" of the sixteen respondents 75 percent (12 of 16) considered their work oriented to both evangelical and secular purposes, while 25 percent said their work was oriented to secular purposes only. Even those who considered their work secular agreed that they were teaching secular subjects, but always with a Christian motivation.

To illustrate the views expressed, one might refer to respondent number 11 who considered his work primarily

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<sup>2</sup>For further information see Chapter Two pages 33 and 34.

evangelistic. He pointed out that some parents would protest the attempt to convert Iranian children, but he always argued that this idea was the very part of the school that made it of value. If religious training were to be eliminated, the moral standards would disintegrate. Many leaders, he claimed, sent their children to missionary schools primarily because religious principles were emphasized.

When the question asked, "Do you believe you were able to notice any influences from American church missionaries upon Iranian leaders as you knew these leaders in terms of their concept of education?", more than 80 percent (13 of 16) of respondents claimed to have noticed influences upon Iranian leaders in terms of their concept of education. These respondents maintained that several Iranian leaders, including cabinet members, members of parliament, and leaders in the educational system, were graduated from American church schools. These leaders supposedly helped direct and shape Iran's educational policies. They may have been instrumental in the adoption of American methods and certain curriculum innovations. Respondent number 1 pointed out, "Some Iranians seemed to think that American ideas are much superior to the Iranian ideas."

In responding to the question, "What were the major differences between the American missionaries' educational programs and the Iranian educational programs?" more than 90 percent (15 of 16) of respondents stated that the major

differences between the American church missionary educational programs and Iranian educational programs were integrity, honesty, and love taught by the American church schools. The American philosophy of liberal education has as its goals to teach students to think, to analyze, to evaluate, and to appreciate rather than to memorize. Church schools provided education for all whereas Middle East education educated only the "able" and rich.

All respondents agreed that Iranian students were given firm ethical and moral foundations in the American schools. They felt that theology and a sense of moral responsibility helped Iranian students to achieve responsible positions in government and in business. None of them mentioned anything about converting Muslims to Christianity.

In short, this part examined the aim of American church missionaries and their work on Iranian education. The missionaries' work was mostly oriented to both evangelical and secular education. They claimed that the religious training helped develop moral standards of the Iranian students and to achieve responsible positions in government and private sectors. Some of the students who graduated from missionary schools supposedly helped develop Iranian's educational policies.

B. Educational Impact of American Church  
Missionaries on the Educational  
Programs of Iran

This part analyzes the answers of the respondents in

four items of the questionnaire. These items are fourteen, fifteen, seventeen, and twenty-two. All are related to the impact of American Church missionaries on educational programs of Iran.

More than 80 percent (13 of 16) of the respondents claimed that American church missionaries brought an entirely new concept of education to Iran. They also stated that beside the American concept of education, other forces contributed to modern education in Iran. No forces were more persuasive than those begun by American missionaries. However, the respondents pointed out that Iranians were introduced to a method of education, involving free inquiry and individual initiative, as opposed to rote memory as practiced in the traditional Iranian schools. Respondent number 11, who had spent 57 of this 59 years in Iran, gave this response:

The concept of rote memorization versus thought-provoking efforts is, I believe, one of the most important phases of the American system introduced into Iran. However, the effectiveness has not been as gratifying as was hoped. Students from the elementary grades on up are under tremendous pressures to do large amounts of home-work, stay up late at night, and lose much sleep, merely memorizing their textbooks. This syndrome causes very many students to become emotionally disturbed. This pressure also inhibits the addition of the arts for enrichment.

Some of the respondents pointed out that Iranian girls had a chance to go to the missionary schools when there were no girls' schools provided in traditional Iranian settings. Less than 20 percent (3 of 16) of respondents

considered that education for women was the most important influence of American Schools on the government of Iran.

Material development was another thing that 25 percent (4 of 16) of respondents mentioned. Improvement of hygienic standards, development of athletics, introduction of music, and development of science laboratories were the most dominant factors in material development.

About 80 percent (13 of 16) of the respondents agreed that mission schools had an influence on the Iranian government's recognition of the importance of education. For instance, respondent number 1, who had been director of a nursing school, stated that before 1916, there were no schools of nursing in Iran. The first schools of nursing were opened in Urumia with Armenian and Assyrian students. After World War I, Muslim students joined.

About 20 percent (3 of 16) of respondents stated that Iranian horizons were broadened by first-hand contact with foreign teachers. Students from missionary schools were qualified for graduate study in the United States and were proficient in English. The curriculum and methods of instruction of the mission schools supposedly offered a more balanced education. Extra-curricular activities were also introduced by mission schools. In addition to the above items, the mission early schools had an influence on the establishment of schools for mass education.

Respondent number 4 pointed out the following:

Happily, the Iranians were able to continue the good work when missionary education was terminated in 1940. Scores of mission school graduates became teachers and administrators in the expanding government school system.

In response to the question, "Did the American church missionary educational programs have any impact on educational programs of Iran?" Seventy-five percent (12 of 16) of respondents agreed that the American missionaries had an impact on educational programs in Iran.

Respondent number 5 pointed out that undoubtedly church missionaries had an impact, but this is difficult to measure. Respondent number 8 stated:

Concepts of unselfishness and honesty in human relations, of zeal and idealism have been absorbed and copied. Respect for women and the development of the abilities of girls and women by modern education have assumed significant importance.

Respondent number 3 emphasized more about women's education. He stated:

It helped to open up the field of women's education. It served to awaken an appreciation of the nursing profession and to stimulate education of nurses. It helped to popularize physical education and athletics. It led to respect for moral values and the obligations of good citizenship and public service.

Respondent number 1 pointed out:

As I stated in the beginning, the American Mission hospital introduced nursing schools in Iran. The program was patterned after the 3 year American hospital curriculum. This lasted until after W.W. II when U.S. aid and the Health Department brought in American and foreign nurse consultants to set up a program for the Health Department.

Respondent number 4 pointed out that laboratories were

established and the experimental method was followed. Athletic programs were developed and library work was emphasized as well as rote learning to pass examinations.

Regarding the educational impact of American church missionaries on the educational programs of Iran, American missionaries claimed that they brought an entirely new concept of education to Iran. Iranians were introduced to a method of education, involving free inquiry and individual initiative, in contrast to the rote memorization practiced in the traditional Iranian schools. They claimed that education for women and material development were other impacts on the Iranian educational system. The mission early schools also had an influence on the establishment of schools for mass education.

### C. Evaluation of the Impact

There were two questionnaire items which pertained to the evaluation of the impact, item number twenty and twenty-one. When asked, "Would an educational system building an Iranian culture be more beneficial to Iranian people in terms of educational goals than an educational system built on an introduced culture?", seventy-five percent (12 of 16) of respondents agreed with the answer of respondent number 12 which pointed out, "The Iranian culture must remain the same. It is wrong to try to introduce a new culture or demand a change to a foreign culture."

Respondent number 2 stated, "We did not want to make Iranians into Americans, but into good Iranian Christians."

Respondent number 7 stated:

The attempt was made to use the best of Iranian culture as the base. To introduce what the American teachers taught were the features of Christian and American which would enrich and enhance Iranian culture and education.

One of the respondents believed that a combination of both local, culture, and world culture were necessary. The following is the opinion of the number 3 respondent:

The missionaries believed in inculcating an appreciation of Iranian history, literature, and culture. But Iranians, as part of the modern world, also needed to learn to feel at home in world culture. Therefore, the endeavor was to work toward both goals at the same time in order for education to be most beneficial to the Iranian people.

About 20 percent of respondents did not agree that Iranian culture could be beneficial to the Iranian educational system. Respondent number 3 stated:

In order for Iran to stand with other nations of the world, there must be a mixing of Iranian and other cultures. I think, Iranian culture is too limited to meet the demands of the present time.

Respondent number 6, pointed out:

What do you mean by 'Iranian Culture'? If it is basically Shiah, Islam as represented by the Qom School of Theology, almost any 'introduced educational system' is better...

Respondent number 10, in his personal correspondence, stated his opinion when he was introducing a former missionary to the investigator. He mentioned:



...He was a very gifted educator. One of his former pupils, a bank manager, said to me once: 'Our missionary teacher made us unfit to live in Iran.' 'How was that?' I asked. 'He taught us to be honest', he replied 'and in Iran, one cannot be honest and live!' He taught character, as did all the missionary teachers.

In response to the question, "Do you believe that ~~Iranians who are products of the Christian church missionary~~ education understand the problems of Iran and Iranians?" more than 85 percent (14 of 16) of the respondents claimed that Iranians who are products of Christian missionary education might understand the problem of Iran and Iranians more adequately than others. Respondent number 6 stated:

They have a low profile now but are one of the finest assets for the future. Some years ago a former ambassador of the U.S. to Egypt toured Iran and afterwards said to me: 'Wherever I went in the provinces I found the most honest, patriotic graduates of American schools.'

Respondent number 3 pointed out:

The students, at least the more thoughtful ones, learned to look at their country and its problems with a broad perspective of understanding and with the skills of analytic thinking. They were taught to find the facts, to ask questions, to be creative, not just to believe what they were told by teachers, textbooks, or political authorities.

Respondent number 11 said, "I believe they understand the conditions and needs in Iran, but at the same time they find it difficult to be able to cope with life when it is at variance with a majority of people." Respondent number 4 stated:

Movement to educate women and discard the veil etc. came from mission educated leaders who understood this as a problem. Others opposed modernization which they considered a problem. We believe those who favored modernization understood the problem better than those who opposed it.

Not all respondents agreed on these points. Respondent number 5 did not believe that Iranians who are products of the Christian church missionary education understood the problems of Iran and Iranians. She pointed out:

After the late Shah initiated universal higher education for all qualified students, students came from all classes. But it is possible that earlier those in higher education reflected their class background and had little understanding of the deep economic and social problems of Iran...

Another one of the respondents did not answer the question and mentioned, "I have no way of knowing."

This part examined the evaluation of the impact of American church missionaries on educational programs of Iran. The respondents claimed that they did not want to change Iranian culture or to make Iranians into Americans. They wanted to change Iranians into good Iranian Christians. They realized that the Iranian culture is very rich but it would be more beneficial if Iranians learned how to cope with other nations. Some of the respondents claimed that Iranians who are graduated from American church schools might understand Iranian problems more adequately than others; but at the same time they find it difficult to be able to cope with life because they were unfit to live in Iran.

## SUMMARY

Because none of the respondent independent variables seemed to affect the answers of respondents, they were treated as a single group for the main purposes of this study.

The main purpose of the American church missionaries, for serving other nations abroad was to convert people to Christianity. With this purpose they traveled to every part of the globe.

The mission schools had some positive effect on educational programs of Iran as reported by the 16 respondents. They had an influence on the Iranian government's recognition of the importance of education. About 20 percent of respondents said that education for women was one of the most important influences that American church schools had on the Iranian government and society. Iranian horizons were broadened by first-hand contact with foreign teachers. The improvement of hygienic standards, development of athletics, and development of science laboratories are recognizable contribution of the missionaries that about 20 percent of them pointed out.

American church missionaries tried to introduce the concept of thought-provoking education versus rote memorization. The emphasis on students learning to "think for themselves," rather than simply memorizing materials in

textbooks provided an important new emphasis on educational programs of Iran.

Seventy-five percent (12 of 16) of former missionaries agreed that it is inappropriate to try to introduce a new culture or demand a change to a foreign culture. They claimed an attempt was made to use the best of Iranian culture as a base and at the same time meet the need for Iranians to learn to feel at home in world culture.

There has been some negative educational impact by American church missionaries on educational programs of Iran. About 20 percent of missionaries think they made Iranian students unfit to live in Iran. Some Iranians seemed to think American ideas are much superior to the Iranian ideas.

## Chapter V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

~~This study has examined the impact of American~~  
church missionaries on educational programs of Iran in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Iran of today is a society undergoing such rapid transition that it has created conflict between old and new ideas. The American church missionaries were the first foreign influence to affect the Iranian educational programs. This study attempted to identify the impact of the educational practices in the mission schools on the Iranian educational programs.

Traditionally, education has been important in Iran's history. Iran's interest in and concern for education has been part of its recorded history of 3,000 years. The Zoroastrian era included elementary, secondary, and higher education. The appearance of Islam in Iran in the 7th century C.E. fostered the growth of knowledge and learning, resulting in the interweaving of Islamic principles and Iranian culture. In old and medieval Iran, customs and religious laws were the prevailing systems that influenced individual and group behavior. They also dictated educational policy.

The elementary schools were privately directed by

family and community interests, but in the seventh century C.E. when mosques were built they became the chief centers of elementary schooling. Secondary education received humanistic and religious support through the endowment foundations maintained by wealthy individuals. This type of institution flourished during the 11th to 13th centuries and later during the Safavid dynasty of the 16th and 17th centuries.

In the schools, there was no fixed term of study. Each master or teacher advanced his own group of pupils when he judged them competent in theology, philosophy, literature, and Arabic. To have received the classical education of the "madreseh" (school), was considered prestigious indeed. In time these religious schools failed to provide students in the 19th century with previous traditional classical background.

By the 19th century, Western institutions were admired by the Iranian ruling class. The orientation of Iranian education experienced changes which were largely the result of Iran's contact with the West. The American church missionaries established the first Western-type school in 1836. They continued such schools into the 20th century, until the government appropriated the schools during the 1930's. The American church missionaries started their work when the social and political climate in Iran was ready to accept them. In the 19th century,

Russia and Britain came into a power struggle over the control of Iran. Iran's sovereignty became contingent upon British and Russian interest. Consequently, Iran failed to advance politically, socially, industrially, and educationally.

The American church missionaries seemed to influence Iranians in many ways. Iranians were introduced to a method of education involving free inquiry and individual initiative versus traditional rote memorization. This seems to have been one of the most important phases of the missionaries' impact on Iranian education. Traditionally, education was limited in Iran. Its curriculum included reading, writing, and familiarity with the Koran. Reading was very important because students were supposed to read and to memorize the Koran. The master (teacher) taught in a rote manner and maintained strict discipline. The curriculum and methods of instruction of the mission schools supposedly offered a more balanced education. Extra-curricular activities were also introduced.

Iranian girls had an opportunity to go to the missionary schools. Previously girls were occasionally admitted to special classes taught by women, but initially, strong opposition by Muslim families limited its progress. Liberal Iranian families educated their daughters at home or sent them to the American mission schools for girls. Girls' education supposedly was an attempt of the mission

schools to influence the Iranian government's educational policies.

Theology and a sense of moral responsibility may have helped Iranian mission school students to achieve responsible positions in government and in the private sectors.

The American church missionaries believed that Iranians have a rich history, literature, and culture, but in order to function as a part of the modern world, they also needed to learn to feel at home in the world culture. The missionaries tried to build an educational system based on Iranian culture. They claimed that there had definitely been no effort to change or alter the culture, but only to introduce Christian principles that might help young pupils become good Iranian Christians.

The impact of American church missionaries was not all positive; some of the respondents perceived negative influences. They felt that they had made Iranian students unfit to live in Iran because they introduced something different. They thought that American ideas were superior to the Iranian ideas. This was thought to have made students want to leave their native country.

#### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

There seems to be disagreement or at least some confusion about the role of native Iranians and alien Christian cultures in missionary education. Missionaries



came with good intention and hope, but their efforts to Christianize Iranians seemed also to involve a change in the native culture. This dilemma seemed to raise many unresolved problems. Many differences in the answers of the respondents seemed to revolve around this issue. Some missionaries rationalized changing the culture for Iran's sake on the basis that Iran needed to be modern and to feel at home in the world culture.

On one hand most respondents stated that Iranians have a rich culture and there has definitely been no effort to change or alter the culture. On the other hand, the nature of the American church mission in Iran was to convert Muslims to Christianity. Seventy-five percent (12 of 16) of the respondents considered their work oriented to both evangelical and secular purposes, while twenty-five percent said their work was oriented to secular purposes only. Even those who considered their work secular agreed that they were always teaching with a Christian motivation. Iranian culture and Islam are interwoven with each other. Converting Iranians meant separating and changing the culture. Regardless of the respondents' claims that there had been no effort to change or alter the Iranian culture, they could not deny their attempt to change Iranian Muslims into Iranian Christians.

Overall, the American church missionaries' educational impact on school programs of Iran seems to have been more

positive than negative. The American missionaries affected Iranian education in many ways and promoted school modernization. They introduced to Iranians a new concept of education which was different from their traditional rote memorization. They helped Iranian girls go to school. The church schools stimulated the Iranian government to establish its own schools and to improve standards of education. Although the American church missionary impact proved productive, people resisted the attempt to change the Iranian religion. Iranians had tended to accept those practices which were in harmony with their own values and culture, and to oppose those which were not. In short, the secular goals of missionary education attempts were more important to Iran than the religious ones. Iranian culture had found uses for secular educational programs while rejecting the missionary religious program.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

One should not trust conclusions on the basis of a single study, so the investigator recommends that further studies be conducted in several areas:

Additional investigation should replicate the study in its broadest sense. This could involve a larger sampling of American church missionaries.

Further investigation should include comments

and evaluation from Iranians who were educated in American church missionary schools. This is the major limitation of this study.

Further research should also examine the effectiveness of those Iranians who are the product of mission schools.

Another focus would include other church missionaries from Western Europe and from other religions. More attention definitely should be given to the aims of missionaries.

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APPENDIX A



APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

The Educational Impact of American Church  
Missionaries on the Educational Programs of Iran  
(1834-1925 C.E.)

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_  
                    first                    middle                    last
2. Address \_\_\_\_\_  
  Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

I intend to quote the answers anonymously by referring to the interview number and role description, e.g. interview #3, a former missionary teacher. If you will allow me to quote you by name, please check here \_\_\_\_\_

3. In addition to filling out the questionnaire, would you be willing to be interviewed? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Maybe \_\_\_
4. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is your sex? Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many years did you spend in Iran? \_\_\_\_\_  
From 19 \_\_\_\_\_ to 19 \_\_\_\_\_
7. For which church did you work? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What was your position(s) within the church in Iran?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. In which part(s) of Iran did you serve?

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10. Would you characterize your experience as primarily in urban areas\_\_\_\_, rural areas\_\_\_\_, or a combination\_\_\_\_.

11. Were you ever involved in the area of education in Iran? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

12. (If the answer is yes) For how many years\_\_\_\_\_

13. (If the answer is yes) In what position(s)\_\_\_\_\_

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14. Explain how Iraninas were affected by American educational ideas in your experiences:

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15. Do you think church schools provided a powerful incentive as well as a model for Iranian government to establish its own schools and improve its standards of education? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

(If yes) In which way(s): (If no) Why not?

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16. Do you believe you were able to notice influences from American church missionaries upon Iranian leaders as you knew these leaders in terms of their concept of education? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (If yes) Please explain how:

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17. What is your reaction to the statement: "American church missionaries brought an entirely new concept of education to Iran."

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18. Were the educational efforts of American church missionaries oriented to secular or evangelical education? Explain:

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19. What were the major differences between the American church missionaries' educational programs and the Iranian educational programs? \_\_\_\_\_

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20. Would an educational system building on Iranian culture be more beneficial to Iranian people in terms of educational goals than an educational system built on an introduced culture? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
21. Do you believe that Iranian's who are products of the Christian church missionary education understand the problems of Iran and Iranians? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
22. Did the American church missionary educational programs have any impact on educational programs of Iran? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_
23. Please feel free to add anything else that I have not asked: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to thank you again for kindly taking time to answer the questionnaire. Your help and cooperation is appreciated deeply and sincerely. Please do not hesitate to make any comments or give suggestions with regard to this study. Please use the open space for your comments and suggestions and any further information about the topic that you would consider to be important for the investigator to know about.

Comments, suggestions, and further information:

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Would you like a short abstract of the study after it is completed? \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B

December 3, 1979

Dear

The purpose of this letter is to request your assistance in gathering data for Mansoor Soleimani's doctoral dissertation. The title of his dissertation is: "The Educational Impact of American Church Missionaries on the Educational Programs of Iran (1834-1925 C.E.)." Your name has been suggested by Reverend John A. Watson, a former missionary to Iran.

This is an important dissertation and will culminate five years of doctoral study for Mr. Soleimani. He has been on leave from his teaching position, Sociology of Education, from the University for Teacher Education in Tehran while doing his doctoral work at our University. We have had many doctoral students from Iran, and Mr. Soleimani is one of the best students. He plans to finish his dissertation in the near future and return to his teaching assignment at the University in Tehran, which you may remember as the "Danesh Saray Ali."

Your completion of his questionnaire will be appreciated by all concerned; the University, the doctoral committee, and especially by Mr. Soleimani. As Dean of the School of Education, I endorse his study without reservation.

With best wishes, I remain

Sincerely,

Oscar T. Jarvis  
Dean

OTJ:P:css

NOTE: This letter was sent to thirteen Seventh-Day Adventist Missionaries

February 4, 1980

Dear

The purpose of this letter is to request your assistance in gathering data for Mansoor Soleimani's doctoral dissertation. The title of his dissertation is: "The Educational Impact of American Church Missionaries on the Educational Programs of Iran (1834-1925 C.E.)." Your name has been suggested by Dr. Kenneth Oster, a former missionary to Iran.

This is an important dissertation and will culminate five years of doctoral study for Mr. Soleimani. He has been on leave from his teaching position, Sociology of Education, from the University for Teacher Education in Tehran while doing his doctoral work at our University. We have had many doctoral students from Iran, and Mr. Soleimani is one of the best students. He plans to finish his dissertation in the near future and return to his teaching assignment at the University in Tehran, which you may remember as the "Danesh Saray Ali."

Your completion of his questionnaire will be appreciated by all concerned; the University, the doctoral committee, and especially by Mr. Soleimani. As Dean of the School of Education, I endorse his study without reservation.

With best wishes, I remain

Sincerely,

Oscar T. Jarvis  
Dean

OTJ:p:css

NOTE: This letter was sent to twelve Seventh-Day Adventist Missionaries.



February 4, 1980

Dear

As a part of my studies for the doctoral degree in Social Foundations at the University of the Pacific, Stockton, California, I am conducting an historical study about the educational impact of American church missionaries on the educational programs of Iran during 1834-1925 C.E. In 1834 the first American church mission started work in Iran, and 1925 saw the end of Ghajar dynasty in terms of efforts of American church missionaries in that period of Iranian history.

There is a relative lack of research dealing with the impact of Western-type schools and the actual role American church missionaries have played in transforming the education and society. This study will examine the impact of educational practices of American church missionaries on the Iranian educational programs in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Your help is invaluable in determining how American church missionaries affected Iranian education and society.

Please answer each question carefully. For convenience sake, you may wish to write out answers on a separate sheet. May I look for your response as soon as possible before the 15th of February, please. I would like to express my appreciation for your valuable time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mansoor Soleimani

Dr. J. Marc Jantzen  
Committee Chairman

MS:jh:css

NOTE: This letter was sent to twenty-five American Church Missionaries.



BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

MANSOOR SOLEIMANI

Born in Iran, March 15, 1936

High School: Asad Abadi, Tehran, Iran

B.S. in Social Work: Tehran School of Social Work, Iran

M.S., Social Management: Institute of Social Research,  
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M.A., Educational Counseling Psychology: University of  
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Professional Experience:

Faculty member of Tehran School of Social Work  
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Affiliations:

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