



September/October 2023

UNREACHED and UNWANTED



God has blessed Sue and me with the opportunity and privilege of coaching, encouraging, and networking with a young couple and their two young children, who are currently raising their prayer support and financial support team to embark on their calling to serve the Lord among the Syrian refugees in Turkey. Their hope and prayers are to complete their support raising efforts in time to move there in June, 2024. We have purposely chosen not to reveal their names or any details about them for security reasons. I invited them to share their story. While you are viewing the photos and reading their story, please ask the Holy Spirit if he wants you to get involved in any way.

*The more I study global events, the more I'm amazed at all that God is doing to bring **unreached people to reachable** places. In 2022 alone, the global refugee population increased by 30%. (UNHCR) Around the world, people are fleeing restricted areas in the millions – places like Syria, Afghanistan, and Iran – and coming to countries that are more open to the Gospel.*

Fatima is one of those people...In 2011, in the crossfire of the Syrian civil war, a bomb destroyed her home and killed her husband. She and her daughter, along with her brother and his family, all fled to southern Turkey.*

In countless places around the world, the cost of safety is much higher than many realize. It means a difficult journey across rugged terrain and the loss of all that's been left behind (home and most possessions, family and community, everything they've ever known). Living in a new country as a refugee comes with language and culture barriers that make daily life difficult. Whether settled in a camp



or in a city, housing options are usually limited to slums and other run-down areas. Under-the-table employment (usually with unfair wages) is the only option for sustaining a family.

And in the Muslim world, employment for women is rare. For Fatima, this likely meant relying heavily on her brother to provide for herself and her daughter. But slowly, she and her family were able to rebuild their lives – putting back together everything they'd lost.

A decade passed and the war in Syria raged on. Fatima and her family faced growing hostility as Turkey began to view refugees as leeches who were stealing their jobs, draining government funding, and straining their economy. The government which had once promised the refugees an escape from their war-torn country, was now promising to return the refugees “voluntarily” to their own country, despite the continued violence.

“Your status as guests has gone on overlong...we can no longer share our bread and water with you. The time has come for you to leave...you are no longer wanted. Return to your country.”

But everything she had known in Syria was gone and the violence was just as bad as the day she'd left.

Then, on February 6, 2023, disaster struck, bringing Fatima's new life crashing down. A 7.8 magnitude earthquake hit southern Turkey, followed a few hours later by a 7.7. Her new home was destroyed and her brother, his wife, and their four kids were all among the nearly 60,000 people that were killed under collapsed buildings.



Fatima and her daughter fled to a northern city to escape the earthquake zone. There they were taken in by a community center distributing food and blankets and just offering an ear to listen and a shoulder to cry on. Fatima sat and wept as she shared her story.

She didn't have anywhere to turn. She had spent her whole life enslaved in Islam, a religion driven by fear – do good so that in the end, if your good outweighs your bad, maybe Allah will let you into Heaven. Allah is not personal. He's not compassionate and merciful. He is a master to be submitted to. He brings no comfort in the midst of suffering.

Consumed with hopelessness having just lost everything again, Fatima asked...

“Why did I ever even leave Syria?”

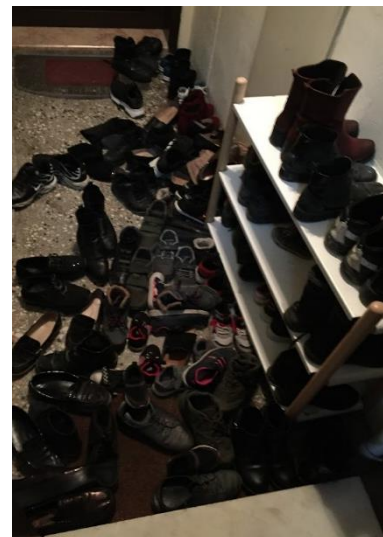
But God knew the answer to her question. The people listening to her story had more than just kind hearts and a desire to help those devastated by the earthquake. They had a message of hope that they themselves had experienced.

It had begun several years earlier in an apartment that a local church had opened to Arab refugees. The believers wanted it to be a space where refugees could come, build relationships, find community, and experience the love of Christ. Through many kinds of programs and events, they sought to come alongside the refugee community however they could.



They did art with the ladies, talking through trauma of the past and difficulties of the present. Meanwhile, childcare was offered for the kids where they could do art projects, play with toys, and have friends who understood what they were going through. On other days, they gave a space for people to come practice conversing in the different languages they were learning.

They did community meals often, clothing distribution as they were able, and took every opportunity to come alongside the refugees and meet the needs that they were able to. As word spread about this loving community that cared about them, even more came.



Questions soon arose of “Why do you guys love us?” and “Why do you love our kids?” One gentleman was even bold enough to ask...

“You guys are Christians and we are Muslims. *If the roles were reversed, we wouldn’t treat you this way.* Why do you care about us?”

As questions were answered, a group formed that wanted to know more about God’s Word. They began meeting regularly with the believers, and many came to know Christ.

These new believers' excitement and passion to share God's truth grew. They were soon helping with the different programs and coming alongside their refugee brothers and sisters – even buying blankets for earthquake victims and reaching out to those with nowhere to turn.

It was there that Fatima sat and wept – surrounded by believers who could share the love of Jesus Christ with her.

Fatima's story is such a powerful testimony of God redeeming devastating situations for His glory! Her journey has drawn her to where she can hear the Gospel for the very first time. All she experienced has fueled the spiritual hunger inside of her that only God can satisfy.

So...now that I'm four pages into this newsletter...what does this have to do with our family?



We are so excited to be joining in this compassion ministry (just a shortened way of saying “coming alongside a hurting community and meeting needs in order to build relationships and share the love and light of Christ”) and are excited to be able to move to the Middle East in the near future and learn from this center – how they’ve been able to effectively engage within the Arab refugee community and communicate the love of Christ and His Gospel so well.

Our desire is to then move to another city with a high concentration of Arab refugees and begin the same kind of compassion ministry. Our prayer is that the Lord will continue to draw hearts to himself and that a thriving church will be planted among the Arab refugee community.

Right now, we are in the process of building a prayer and giving partnership team to join with us in the work that God is doing. We are looking for people to partner through monthly giving and we are also working on building a team of 100 people who will commit to praying for us daily.



I have included these stock photos of young families to help you imagine with me what it could have looked like if we had decided to include photos of this young missionary couple with two young children. We decided it was wise to protect their identity, not knowing where this Newsletter may end up.

I believe if you have read this far into this Newsletter, you would like to know the back stories of this missionary couple. To protect their identity please note that “W” stands for wife and “H” stands for husband.

“W” grew up as a missionary kid in Papua New Guinea. She loved her childhood in the tropical rainforest and loved being able to watch first-hand what the Lord was doing around the world. After graduating high school, she attended a two-year Bible college in southern Michigan to get a better idea of how the Lord might be calling her to be involved in ministry.

In conversations with other missionaries, she was introduced to the global refugee situation. In the midst of all the suffering in the world, she was blown away by how God was redeeming people's stories of suffering for His glory – how He was using global events to bring unreached people to reachable places. She began looking into how she might be able to serve short-term and was introduced to an opportunity interning among Arabs. It was while she was preparing for her short-term trip that she met "H".

"H" grew up as a missionary kid in Burkina Faso. Despite growing up with parents in ministry, he didn't start walking with the Lord until late in high school. Wanting to spend some time really diving into the Word, he decided to attend the same two-year Bible college.

As he was studying, "H" was drawn to what God was doing among unreached people around the world. Being familiar with tribal church-planting (since that's what his parents had done), he grabbed onto that. But as "H" and "W" started dating, "W" was very adamant about refugee ministry, knowing that was what the Lord was calling her to. After much prayer and seeking counsel, the Lord helped "H" to realize that his passion specifically for reaching the unreached could be used by God just as well among refugees. Just a couple months after they started dating, "W" was on a plane headed to the Middle East. In the midst of their long-distance relationship, they got to see first-hand compassion ministry among Arab refugees in that part of the world and both felt that was what the Lord was calling them to. When "W" returned from her internship, "H" waited all of 3 days before proposing (he only waited that long because his roommate had bet him that he couldn't).

After getting married, they decided to wait a few years before going into ministry just to get established as a couple and really build deep relationships at their church. During that time, they got to be a part of the worship ministry at their church and got plugged in well to a small group. It was the first time they were able to really invest in a church body, having both grown up overseas.

The Lord also surprised them with two adorable kids. Their oldest is two and currently enjoys playing with his dinosaurs, singing incoherent songs, and running laps around their living room. Their youngest is almost four months and enjoys grabbing for rattles, sucking on her fingers, and giggling at her older brother. They are very excited to be stepping into ministry as a family of four and are excited to see what the Lord does.

If you'd be interested in partnership or just want to learn more or receive our monthly newsletters, we'd love to talk more with you! Phone: 616-552-3015 Email: nhkay20@outlook.com

Sue and I love this young missionary couple with two young children. They are awesome! It is an honor and a blessing for us to be able to encourage them, coach and mentor them, and help connect them with others who will pray for them and help support their ministry. It is through your faithful prayers and support of us, and our ministry with PastorCare, that we are able to invest in this young missionary family.

We are so thankful and grateful for you!!



Thanks for partnering with PastorCare West Michigan through your prayers and financial donations.

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