

Week of Prayer

— DAY 5 —



A frozen body lay not far from where Anahita and her family huddled together.

They shivered, trying to stay warm enough to survive the night. The frozen body was most likely a refugee following the mountainous escape route, but they never made it to a safe haven.

This wasn't the trajectory Anahita saw her life taking. Anahita, with her husband and children, escaped their homeland in Central Asia, traveling through several countries, sometimes on foot, with the goal of reaching a country in western Europe. It took her family four years of traveling and living in refugee camps to reach the country where they'd finally settle.

One of a mother's worst nightmares became a devastating reality when Anahita miscarried a baby.

International Mission Board missionary Freshta Aziz said the emotional pain, combined with culture shock, plunged Anahita into a deep depression that required psychiatric treatment. It was in this raw era of her life that Anahita began attending the women's ministry that Freshta hosted.

Pray God gives Freshta wisdom as she ministers to women who've experienced compounded traumas.

Freshta and her husband, Nawid, minister to refugees in western Europe. They spent time in the country many of the refugees call home. Nawid tells people they came to share that the Lord placed them on their hearts and there is a light no darkness can overcome.

Freshta is letting her light shine among these women. During group meetings, she shares a Bible story before introducing a craft that connects to a gospel message. One week she taught the women how to make candles and shared that through His sacrifice, we can live eternally in the light.

The candle Anahita made now holds symbolic meaning for her. It's a reminder that Jesus is the light. These types of lessons helped her overcome depression. She now attends church with Nawid and Freshta, and her husband committed his life to Christ. Anahita has yet to decide, but the Azizes pray she will choose to follow Him as well.

Will you pray now that Anahita will make the decision to follow Christ?

In addition to ministering to non-believing refugees, the Azizes also serve Christian refugees, many of whom came to faith in refugee camps. Nawid teaches the believers foundational theology and disciples them. The refugees cannot speak the local language, making attending local fellowships difficult, but the Azizes are fluent in their Central Asian language. The refugees treat Nawid and Freshta as one of their own.

Twenty-seven believers attended a Christmas party the Azizes hosted their first year living in the country. Last year, 53 people joined. This past summer, the Azizes invited 60 refugees to summer camps that consisted of Bible seminars for adults, a youth camp, and Vacation Bible School.

While grief and desolation are sign markers on the refugees' journeys, hope and new beginnings are the landmarks of their current season.

Thank the Lord for the hope many refugees are finding. Pray the men and women living in trauma will find healing in the divine Healer.

*Some names changed for security reasons