

MATT & APRYL HAYNES MISSIONARIES TO KURDISTAN

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Dear Pastor

September - October 2016

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

-2 Peter 3:9

"Let our rallying cry be: 'Every stronghold of Islam for Christ!' Not a war of gunboats or of diplomacy, but a Holy War with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered."

Samuel M Zwemer (from "Islam, a challenge to faith")

As most reading this letter will be aware, the long-awaited liberation of the city of Mosul (Biblical Nineveh) has begun. Multiple countries and state militias are cooperating to expel ISIS from Mosul proper and surrounding towns and villages. The KRG (Kurdish Regional Government) has stated that there are 4,000 Kurdish Peshmerga (soldiers) involved in the conflict. It is a massive campaign that has taken much time to plan and seems highly likely to succeed in removing ISIS.

We would ask you to pray for the invasion and that the loss of life and casualties will be as low as possible.



The city of Mosul. Located just 93km (57 miles) south of our home. These people, both terrorists and innocents, need the Gospel.

Prayer Requests

- **Salvation of the people of Kurdistan.**
- **Knowledge and clarity of mind in learning the Kurdish language.**
- **Wisdom to walk rightly before God and man.**

As November looms over the US this invasion will be mutilated and morphed into the most effective soundbites possible for candidates to use in their election campaigns. The death of good men, bad men, women and children will become nothing more than statistics on Fox and CNN to be exploited for the viewing pleasure of an entertainment-obsessed American culture. Humanly speaking their deaths will serve no greater purpose than to prove the point of one candidate or another. For most American voters and politicians, that will be the sum total of the worth of each life lost.

I challenge you, Christian, to stay above the fray. To see men as God sees them...as the just reward of the sacrifice paid by Christ. I challenge you, Christian, to see the people of Mosul not as Muslims in need of liberation from ISIS but as souls in need of the liberation of the Gospel. They are not pawns for the politics of others, but their hearts are the battleground for which we fight. I challenge you, Christian, not to see the expulsion of ISIS as the victory but, as it truly is, an opportunity to share the Gospel to those who have so long been in desperate need of it.

We rejoice in the coming liberation of their homes but what of their souls? What of their eternity? Mosul will shine no brighter for the absence of ISIS, but stands in darkness for the absence of the Gospel of Christ.

God bless you. We pray for you.

Matt Haynes





The Wife's perspective

Peshmerga

“Those Who Face Death”

My husband will have mentioned the current liberation of Mosul from ISIS. Heavily involved in this fight are soldiers called the Kurdish Peshmerga. The Kurds are fiercely proud of their soldiers.

“Peshmerga” literally means “those who face death”. These men face grueling circumstances trying to free their homeland from their enemy, ISIS. They spend weeks away from home at a time, fight often with sporadic pay (if any at all) from the government, and the pictures of those who’ve died in the fight (Kurds call them martyrs) are posted throughout towns and villages here. They’ve been, arguably, the most effective force against ISIS. It’s understandable and right that they’re so loved and revered.

This battle for Mosul is a big one. It will impact the face of this whole conflict, likely cause a massive shift in migration of refugees, and, once complete, possibly even begin a civil war at our doorstep here in Iraq. This fight is happening as I type this letter - a mere 57 miles from where I sit. Gunfire is right now being exchanged and the U.S.-led coalition is likely bombing on the outskirts of the city.

I don’t say all of this to instill fear regarding our being here, though I’m sure by now it sounds like I am. As we’ve said many times, we’re actually quite sheltered from the conflict here. We go about our daily life relatively unaffected (MUCH less affected than our Kurdish neighbors) and we are surprisingly and blessedly quite protected in this little safe-haven of Kurdistan.

I say all of this instead to share with you what’s been on my mind regarding all of this. ISIS has, understandably, received an incredible amount of media attention and because of this, Matt and I have been recipients of many kind statements from friends and family about how brave we must be and how much we’re sacrificing in being here. These statements, though so appreciated, are quite unwarranted. They are simply not the case given what I mentioned in the previous paragraph. I’m not downplaying the situation, but simply being truthful that we are surprisingly unaffected by it. But even if it were true that we were facing daily threats and in fear for our lives (which again, we are not), there’s a very real truth God’s been continually bringing to my mind. Most often, it is not the literal giving of one’s life that God encourages in His Word. Instead, the emphasis to the Christian seems to be this:

1 Corinthians 15: 31 “... I die daily.”

The call to the New Testament Christian is the DAILY death to self. Though the literal death of our precious Savior was the greatest thing He could’ve done for us, it’s the DAILY death to myself that Christ

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desires of me. In truth, it’s possible for me to live an entire life in a “hot zone” of violence and war and even die a martyr’s death while at the same time daily ignoring this call. The greatest act I can accomplish for Christ is not an act at all. It’s simply surrendering and humbling myself to Him every day. My decrease equals His increase – not in physical death, but in what’s only seen by HIS eyes – my heart’s surrender to Him. If we’re going to make a difference in Kurdistan it will be in this. So let us be “those who face death” – not necessarily in PHYSICALLY giving our life FOR God, but in DAILY giving our life TO God.

