



Kurdistan

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Dear Pastor,

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“Where Christ was born Mohammed’s name is called from minarets five times daily, but where Mohammed was born no Christian dares enter.”

(Samuel M. Zwemer, *Islam: A Challenge to Faith*).

How often I have read of the fearless missionary exploits of the Jesuits, Mormons, Orthodox and Muslims. Their institutions notwithstanding, the individuals strove to convert men and nations alike to that which they believed to be truth. For them, this call remains as strong and as vital today as for those who came before. How often I have heard in our Baptist churches, “Well, it’s just too dangerous there,” “Well, brother, we just can’t get in. The government won’t allow it.”

When did it become necessary for governments to approve of or support the spread of the Gospel? When did the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ become subservient to the whims of society? Are the souls of men less valuable than the conveniences of democracy? Perhaps when we, Baptists, stand before God with our excuses of “foreign languages are too hard,” “I didn’t like the food,” “the people didn’t listen,” “I got homesick,” and the one that tears most at my heart - “they’re just Muslims anyway” perhaps he will understand why we chose not to spread the Gospel. Perhaps he will have pity on our excuses, but I think not.

KURDISTAN

Please pray for the upcoming referendum in Kurdistan. The people will vote on September 25th in a Yes/No survey vote regarding their desire for independence. This will not be a binding vote. Results were decided long before the election was announced. Else there would be no vote! We ask for prayer as internal tensions between Kurdish political parties is very high at the moment. It would break our hearts to see another civil war in a land that has not known peace for decades. One unsaved Kurd killing another unsaved Kurd and neither having had opportunity to hear the Gospel is a horror to contemplate.

We do not ask the Lord for an understanding of current events but that he would use us no matter what events are occurring. God did not call us to bring democracy and government to Kurdistan but to preach the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the whole of our duty and privilege no matter the state of government, society or popular sentiment.

If a man dies without Christ in a representative democracy does he go to a better Hell? Does he burn less in the life to come than that man who dies in a pagan land? Whether democracy or dictatorship, whether socialism or communism Christ must be proclaimed. Freedom purchased by man is fleeting, temporal, and can be taken away. The freedom purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ is everlasting and that message is worth suffering for.

May we be worthy of bearing that most sacred title bestowed upon us by our enemies....Christian.

Your servant,
Matt Haynes



Apryl and I with Mr. Kamal Khdr. He is Yezidi. We call him Mr Happy because we always leave his house smiling.





The Wife's perspective

Cooking for Kurds – More on the “Art” of Hospitality

I've talked about hospitality here before – the importance of it and how God's been working in my life (through sometimes funny circumstances). Kurds LOVE food and time together around meals. The women are masters of the kitchen and there's a kind of joke that a woman who makes good dolma will make a good wife. The food is delicious, but not varied and Kurdish women are hospitable, but quite blunt and they enjoy passing the time by gossiping with neighbor ladies.

So that's where I come in. I was apprehensive of cooking for Kurds. For months, we had them for tea and snacks, but no meals. I got away with this for as long as possible until I knew God said it was time to step out of my comfort zone.

We started with a family we knew would be forgiving. I cooked “safe” American food and, overall, it went well that first time. I'm sure they were apprehensive about certain dishes and had the grace not to show it and I'm certain they laughed about it later, but all in all, it went well. We've since then fed a lot more neighbors and I've been learning more and more about hospitality.

That first time cooking for them made me think about *why* it was a success. Should having people in my home be a success because they think I'm a good cook or that I'm equal to them in the kitchen? Should success be because conversation flowed perfectly with no awkward silences? Should the success be because they think my home is beautiful or as sparkling clean as the home of a Kurdish woman? I have to say, I'm going to keep working on those areas, but the answer to those questions is a resounding no. I think God defines hospitality, not us and even though He hasn't strictly defined it in the Bible (other than that we should extend hospitality without grudging), God has never based our success as New Testament Christians by our performance or perfection – he bases it on our love and obedience. So I realize more and more that, no matter where I am in the world, it's about love. Love and extending love. That's what will make a difference with people and that's ministry anyway.

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*My shortcomings (and I have many) will never cause
someone to feel like I care less about them, but
finding reasons to not invite them into my life might.*

One thing I know - a failed dish or imperfect house certainly isn't going to make someone feel less loved! In fact, it may actually make me seem human and approachable! I need to quit extending *myself* to people and simply extend the love of Christ! They don't need me. They need him and *he* has *so much* to offer them.

