

As the refugee crisis of Europe continues to spiral out of control, the sheer magnitude of those seeking asylum is just beyond comprehension. Nations tasked with moral and ethical responsibilities of providing shelter and safety are scrambling for answers, and there are no easy answers. The task at hand is huge, the numbers are unfathomable, how do the nations proceed, how do the agencies and authorities cope with the mass exodus of the middle east?

Perhaps the greater question is how do we as Christians respond to so great a need? What are our roles in caring for these refugees? We can't solve or answer for the nations, but we can for ourselves, we can go, we can help, we can give, we can share and we can pray!

Having personally witnessed the scenes most have seen in the news, people jumping barriers, running down motorways, lanes blocked by a sea of humanity, desperation and fear scaring the faces of those young and old - we are haunted by the question, "What can we do?" Then being caught on the other side of the Austrian border when it closed, praying to find a way through, our hearts were deeply seared with the plight of these refugees. We knew we had to do something.... Not five minutes from our home, is a local Heim, (temporary housing for those seeking asylum in Austria) which has been flooded by individuals, families and children from Syria and neighboring countries in the middle east. Here at the local level we have found a place to make a difference, for the refugees and most importantly we pray for the Kingdom.

Most, if not all, of those in the Heim (or camp, as it is referred to by workers) are Muslims. It is to this group of people that we are reaching out and ministering to in the love of Jesus. Yes, the needs are great, but we are seeking to show up and help where and when we can. Each week ministry is different, each day ministry is different, and each time.... *there are always the children*. As we pull into "the camp" children race to the car shouting Ava's name. They are so happy that someone, especially Ava has come to play with them.

This week we took 5 of the 12 children at the camp, and a young Syrian mother to a playground on top of a nearby mountain. We watched with joy as they played together, having temporarily left their sorrows behind. One frightful moment came, when Daanya, a little girl of 4, ran and picked up a mushroom and quickly ate it. (There are several poisonous mushrooms found in this area.) What we shockingly witnessed was a learned behavior from eating whatever she and her father could find to eat on their journey from Iraq. The whereabouts of her mother is unknown.

Each child's story is heart breaking - Samir (11) whose father was killed in Syria, and his mother is somewhere in Lebanon, has joined his cousin Hayder (8) and his family at the camp. Maryam (6) is from Chechnya, Russia and seems to have latched on to Ava for fear of losing her only friend. Huda is a 17 year old pregnant woman, who fled war torn Syria with her husband and toddler bringing nothing with them, but the clothes they had on.





As the children played, Kathleen, with sleeping toddler in her arms, did her best to communicate with Huda. Huda speaks no German, and we no Arabic ... communication is a serious challenge! By charades, gestures, and drawing pictures in the dirt what became apparent was that Huda was in desperate need for some of the things that we all take for granted. Her only pair of shoes, 2 sizes too big, was worn and tattered. Her only shirt short sleeve under her Abaya (cloak) was forcing her to always wear the heavy cloak, as she could not show the skin on her arms. As we gathered a few things for her we shared with others within the gemeente and watched how the Lord weaved through our tiny group the provisions he had already made mime months prior. *"This is amazing", one of our congregation replied with a huge smile on her face, "nine months ago I bought a pair of good shoes, but found later at home that they didn't fit. Instead of giving them, or throwing them away, I decided to keep them. I thought at the time, surely they are intended for someone else and I'll keep them until that person comes along."* That person did come along ...she came a long way from Syria.

As with the shoes, God had been working his plan, long before we knew what was before us. This time provision for Huda came through Daniel's mother, Iris, who went to be with the Lord earlier this year. Iris had a great love of scarves; she seriously had one for every outfit and wore them in class and style. When she passed away we were given a bag of her scarves with the intention of making a memory quilt out of them. What we didn't know is that God had a different plan for them. Huda's need was far greater than ours. So, as we passed along the scarves to her, we prayed and asked for the Holy Spirit's anointing to be upon each one, to break every spirit of deception and that the Lord Jesus Christ would become her head-covering. Afterward we just happened to look up in Arabic, what the name Huda means and were amazed to discover that it means... "Right Guidance!"

We are so blessed to be able to serve and minister to these families the love of Jesus Christ and it is your financial gifts that have allowed us to meet so many practical needs, thank you for partnering in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord continues to work His plan, we continue to seek His face, and we continue to pray and give thanks for you and your far outreaching love and support for us and for these refugees.

May The Lord richly bless you and keep you!

For His Fame Among the Nations!  
Daniel, Kathleen & Ava