

REACH THE REST

UPDATE

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I Left Completely Different

Recently, a team guided by Reach the Rest President, Mike Jackson, traveled to Kurdistan to assess humanitarian and spiritual needs. The situation is urgent and continues to grow daily.

In one particular village, the team had an opportunity to visit a community center with hundreds of Yazidi children, most being orphans. Many have lost their parents. Some have even witnessed them murdered at the hands of ISIS. Most families have been separated and have no means of finding one another.



Kurdistan Team

The following are excerpts from the notes of Kim Zimmerman, one of the team members, as they ministered in this village:

When we walked into the community hall, I thought it was a gathering of some sorts, which it was, but in my mind I wanted it to be a celebration. All seven of us walked right up the middle of about two hundred children, none of whom were making a sound.

When we reached the front, we were greeted kindly by volunteers. They explained to us that the children sitting in the room were orphaned by ISIS. My heart came up to my throat. Their fathers had been killed and most of their mothers had been captured.

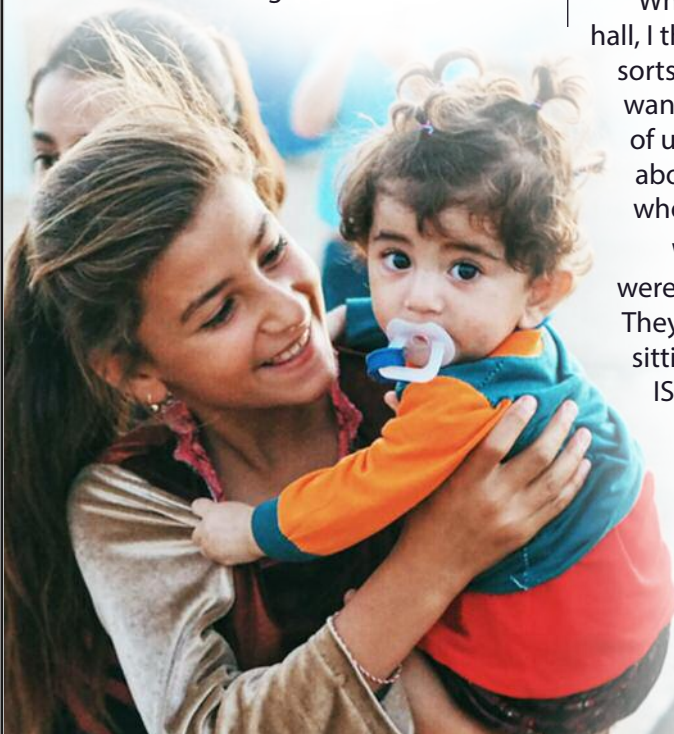
These children have lost everything. They have nothing. I left feeling overwhelmed and challenged.

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Prayer Points

- Pray for the thousands of refugees who are fleeing Mosul into the Kurdistan region. Pray that they would be exposed to the gospel and the Holy Spirit will confirm their need for Jesus.
- Pray for our Reach the Rest Partner, Ashty, and his team as they meet urgent physical and spiritual needs of refugees and displaced peoples streaming into their region.
- Pray for a Reach the Rest team that is traveling in a closed Persian country. They are investigating opportunities to bring the Gospel as well as Bibles into the country.
- Pray as our brothers and sisters speak of God's gift of salvation. Pray that they will communicate in a way that will be clear to their own people. May these unreached groups have their eyes opened to the truth of His Word.

continued



FOCUS ON Kurdistan

Although not an official nation or country, the Kurds live primarily in an area known as Kurdistan. This 74,000 square mile mountainous territory runs through Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and several isolated areas in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. With a population of 40 million, the Kurds are the third largest ethnic group in the Middle East. The Kurds are the largest ethnic group in the world that does not have a state of its own.



Muslims constitute 97% of the Kurdish population. Though Islam is thought to be a religion of governance as well as spirituality, the Kurds have managed to keep their spiritual identity separated from their national identity. Most Muslim Kurds do not consider themselves to be particularly religious as other followers of Islam.

Most Kurds can speak Arabic. However, there are three major language groups among the Kurds: Kurmanji, Behdini, and Sorani. The majority speak Kurmanji. Traditionally, the Kurds have been a persecuted people. Most notably, the Kurds received international attention in 1988 when former Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, launched his Anfal Campaign in an attempt to completely annihilate the Kurdish people. This genocide killed thousands of Kurds.

I Left Completely Different *continued*

I was compelled to do what I could to meet their needs. I was also burdened to share what I had witnessed with my brothers and sisters in Christ. Winter is coming. They need warm clothes and blankets. We can supply these basic needs. All of us can do something. To do nothing would cause us to miss a tremendous opportunity to become the loving arms of Jesus to children devastated by violence.



In another section of the community hall, an older couple and a young woman, about my age, kept inching towards us on the couch where we were sitting. As he moved closer, he began motioning towards his eyes and mouth. Through our translator, he told me that the young woman had been kidnapped by ISIS and taken to Syria. The older couple is her in-laws. They paid \$15,000

to get her back. Since she has been home she hasn't been talking. She covers her face and feels ashamed.

The love this couple has for their daughter-in-law is incredible. Through our translator, I was able to tell her that I thought she was beautiful and that we loved her. The man also told us that his other son and daughter were taken as well, but he does not have the means to get them back.

When leaning in to kiss the mother and daughter-in-law they embraced me so deeply. That small amount of time spent in the community hall changed me forever.

When I walked into the building, I was one person. But when I left, I was someone completely different.

Prayer Points

- Pray for our work among Islamic religious leaders. National believers are taking the truth to the Imams in order to influence the community from the top down. They disciple new converts and then send them out armed with the truth of Jesus Christ.



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