

The Beautiful Face of Trauma

— By Dr. Laila Risgallah Wahba

My trip to Amman, Jordan was totally unplanned. I had to fly there because my husband had emergency surgery during his trip. I flew from Egypt, thinking that God had intercepted my plan and my to-do list. However, through the years, I learned that when God does that, I will accept it joyfully. Isn't He the One who said, "I know the plans I have for you?" My heart is overwhelmed with emotion. I have mixed feelings of happiness, sadness, anger, perplexity, and confidence. I am amazed at how God can cause His plan to come to pass for millions of people just with one event.

Issa, who was taking my husband and me back to the airport, asked us if we had one hour to go and see his ministry. It is the ministry of ن (pronounced noon). ن is the symbol that Isis marked the Christian homes and businesses. It stands for Nazarene or Nosrani, the Arabic word for Christian. Whoever has that mark on their home had one of two choices: convert to Islam and join Isis or die. Many Christians fled. In fact, 250,000 Christians fled Mosul in Iraq within six hours. Now ن became a symbol to remind Christians to pray for the persecuted church. The place we visited ministered to hundreds of children, youth, women, and men who fled from Iraq to Jordan.

How can God possibly bring good out of evil? Only He can do that. What we saw were kids who speak neither Arabic nor English—kids who have been out of school for years because of the war—learning English, math, science and computer. Teachers use art, dance, and singing to give the kids the space to tell about their traumas. What amazed me was the vision of that place: that all those kids become disciples of Jesus to tell about His love wherever they go in the world. As we walked around, I could hear the kids sing the English worship song, "10,000 Reasons". How can God use such a horrific event and bring such beauty? Indeed, beauty from literal ashes.

Then, we went to where they were teaching men and youth how to do mosaic. "We want them to earn money with dignity. Even though they fled Iraq because they were Christians, many of them were only nominal Christians: they did not have a real relationship with Jesus." As they learned, many came to Christ. One of them told me, "We want to thank

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IN FOCUS



— By Amy Wilson, Editor

We often hear the statistics of the number of refugees who are struggling around the world today. For this issue of ***The Barnabas Letter***, we wanted to focus on how God is working in and through the lives of some refugees, how He is using their experiences to reach others who may not know Him, and how He is touching the hearts of others who have had their own trauma and know

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ISIS because if we had not fled our homes, we would not have known Jesus. They can take our homes, our cars, and our money from us, but they cannot take away Jesus from us.” Some Iraqi women fled with their children because their husbands were killed. In Jordan, they were prostituted for rent and food. Then they found the place that taught them sewing and gave them sewing machines. I was reminded of Psalm 76.10 “Surely your wrath against mankind brings you praise” (NIV).

How do refugees adapt to a new culture? How can they assimilate in a place that is not their home? Christians must decide to become the hands and feet of Jesus. We don’t look at the color or the religion of that person, but we look at the heart, at the needs, at the losses, at the trauma, and at the opportunity. ■



Laila Risgallah Wahba was born in Cairo, Egypt, and is passionate about children and their welfare. She practiced medicine for nearly two decades as a pediatrician with a master’s degree in pediatrics and a doctorate in childhood studies. In 2009, Laila decided to equip herself to abolish sexual abuse and bullying. She studied for the Middle East Sexual Abuse-Related Pastoral Counseling diploma, a three-year certificate program, and graduated in 2012. She is known for her Christian youth TV program, *We Will Live our Lives Well*, seen by an audience of 40 million Arabic speakers each week in the Middle East, North Africa, Canada, and the U.S.

Laila is the founder and president of *Not Guilty, Inc.*; which works towards abolishing sexual abuse and bullying. She is an Ashoka Fellow, an inspirational public speaker, author, and determined social advocate. She is passionate about strong leadership and empowering others. Her determined mission is to be a voice for the unheard and fight against sexual abuse in society. She created the first-ever anti-sexual abuse mobile app for kids, *S.K.I.T.*, and is a faculty member with the Haggi Institute for Advanced Leadership Training. Laila is married to Wahid, and they have two sons.

IN FOCUS

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how invaluable it is to share His love with others to help them through their own pain. Just as Jesus was broken out of love for His people, He uses the brokenness of others to reach them with His love. God wastes nothing ... no experience in our lives is meaningless. As Ann Voskamp so beautifully wrote in her book, *The Broken Way*, “... (we are) human beings who belong to each other and who will carry each other ... Wasn’t suffering then actually a call for us to be a community, to stand together and bear under, trusting that arms of love are always under us?” (pg. 172).

We pray that this issue encourages your heart to see how nothing is wasted. We pray that you are encouraged to share with others who may be hurting how God and His love have brought you through your own suffering. May you be greatly blessed as you pray for the refugees and ask God whom you can love today.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”
2 Corinthians 1:3-4 ■

Serving Him Together,
Amy Wilson, Editor



Biography
Sharo is a nurse who currently lives with his family in Northern Iraq. They founded a charity called *Hope for Communities*

For information please email them on:
hopeforcommunities@hotmail.com.
or visit them on
<https://www.facebook.com/Hope-for-Communities>
202782383692285/,
that works to restore hope into places where this has been loss. They are currently working with refugee and IDP communities.

Refugee Used by God

I was born in the Kurdish region of Iraq in 1985 where there were wars and instability, including direct threats to my family. Due to these threats, we moved around frequently, and I never had the opportunity to attend school or make friends. In 1991 we fled to Turkey with a wave of refugees. I remember more from our time in Turkey, but sadly these are mostly negative memories. We spent nearly one and a half years in Turkey before we were moved to London, UK. I think I have suppressed many memories of these early years.

Arriving in London was exciting and scary. For my parents this was what they had hoped for—freedom, peace, and stability. But we had no one at that time to support us as we settled in and none of us spoke any English. The first few months of school were unbearable. We had no one to speak to or translate for us. My sister and I would hold each other tightly during break times, both filled with fear. This would go on to shape my experience in my future education, where I struggled through until university. It is difficult to adapt to a new culture and systems without support. My parents were also struggling themselves and trying to work multiple jobs (often till the early hours of the morning). They didn’t understand the culture, education, or language, so were not able to support us.

At the age of 15, after attending a local church youth club for a few years, I decided to follow Jesus. By this stage I had become very “British” (in my eyes). However, the culture divide between British and Kurdish would at times make it hard for me to fit in. It took many years of learning and growing together for both me and my church. The church would go on to make much effort in trying to become more international in its heart and vision and wanting to reflect the kingdom of God. At the age of 18 I felt God speak to me about sending me back to Northern Iraq. He had told me that He had taken me out, rescued me, shown me a new life and hope and would send me back one day.

At the age of 30 I returned with my wife and children. Along the way, God restored and healed many wounds, bitterness, and insecurities I had. A few months before going back, He healed the hurt and bitterness I had towards Turkish people. We have had wonderful times of fellowship with believers. God wants to love us lavishly and bring us to a place where we can imitate him. It is a privilege being back in northern Iraq to show love and bring hope to the refugees and local people. Pray with me that the work that Jesus has done in me will speak to others who are in a place of fear and hopelessness, and those who have experienced unimaginable trauma. ■

A Marginalized Sect of Refugees

— By Arianne Willeboer

The Kurdish group of Yazidis are not Christians, nor Muslims. Yazdanism is the native religion of the Kurdish people. They believe in seven angels from God, and they worship the highest (which is symbolized as a peacock). He is fallen angel of God who is trying to get back to God. This group is seen by most as devil worshipers, and Isis attacked them greatly for this especially in August 2014. More than 2 million are seeking refuge on border of Iraqi Kurdistan. Isis surrounded this community, killing as many as they could. The Kurds had to run for their lives, but many couldn't escape. Those who did still have great trauma over the loss of their loved ones during this persecution.

Camps of refugees now have about 20,000 people in each one (including about 5,000 kids in each). There are open fields and unfinished buildings in the areas between the camps. These people live in very difficult circumstances. The community is filled with women who have been sexually abused, beaten, etc. by Isis prior to this massive attack as well. Many young were sold as sex slaves by Isis. There are many projects for orphans in these camps. Children are considered orphaned if you have no father (even if you still have a mother). There are many projects for orphans in these camps. For babies who were fathered by Isis, it is even more problematic. These kids are given no identity, are outcast, and communities do not want them.

I am praying that God will intervene in these children's lives and rescue them from their own traumas. God has showed me how He wants me involved to rescue these children and show them His love. I am grateful for the training I have had, through CCTI and more, to help in this process. Iraqi Kurdistan is where many live on edges of two different groups, so work at the borders is very important. God has given me a vision of a roll of film and when it is exposed to light, all images are erased. This is what I feel God wants for the Kurdish people, especially the children.

Recently, a girl told one of my co-workers that she wanted to be Christian. Both she and her mom decided to believe in Christ. These are the first two known to follow Christ, and I am so excited to see God working in the lives and starting those conversions. Many want to know why we are helping them, so they hear it is because of God and it really opens their hearts. I believe God is a restorative God and will restore identity that He gave them at birth. He created them differently for a reason and I believe its because they can be used by God.

Please pray hearts will change and desire to care for these children who are orphaned. There is much openness now, we can share Jesus freely in these camps, which is a praise that it is now open.

About the Author Arianne Willeboer

Arianne Willeboer is a 33-year-old from Holland who completed CCTI's Module 1 On-line course in Fall of 2017 and the Train the Trainer's On-line Course in March 2018. She has been working with refugees for the last 10 years, and since 2016 has had on her heart to specifically work with the Kurdish refugees. She started this process to better learn the Middle East culture by working in Lebanon. Arianne now works with Kurdish refugees in Iraq.

“Focused Prayer for God’s Children: Venezuela”

The Children’s Prayer Bulletin September 2018

2014...was the year severe acute malnutrition began to be noticed on a large scale among Venezuelan children.

“Severe Acute Malnutrition” is...

...the most severe form of malnutrition. Children are frail, often skeletal in appearance with severe muscle wasting and require urgent care in order to survive. Some youngsters may have nutritional edema (swollen feet, limbs and hands). It is a major cause of death for children younger than 5 years of age. Illnesses such as diarrhea and pneumonia often prove fatal to such vulnerable little lives.

A Recent Phenomenon Ten years ago...

...Venezuela was economically similar to other developing Latin American countries. Lower class families experienced poverty; some estimate that 2/3 of the population fell into this category. Street children, Aboriginal street children, and abandoned children experienced homelessness, limited access to education and sports programs as well as diseases such as anemia and scoliosis. Even so, severe acute malnutrition was uncommon.

Nowadays...

...it is common to see children die of severe acute malnutrition in hospitals all over Venezuela, a country that is so rich in natural resources that it has the largest proven oil reserves in the world!

Please Pray!...that God will save the children from starvation. Do not remember the iniquities of our forefathers against us; Let Your compassion come quickly to meet us, For we are brought very low. Psalm 79:8

...for the Lord to give grace to the Venezuelan church to be generous to all those around them; and may He meet the needs of God’s people as well. For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, ‘You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.’ Deuteronomy 15:11
I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. Psalm 37:25

...for the Lord to give the Venezuelan church great passion and compassion to share the gospel, as their loving, sacrificial generosity brings them in contact with unbelievers suffering alongside themselves.
But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have... 1 Peter 3:15a

...for the Lord to use physical hunger to nurture spiritual hunger for truth.
But he answered, “It is written, “ ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ “ Matthew 4:4

...for wise solutions to be implemented by the governmentof Venezuela and for people in the highest positions in government to turn to the Lord.
First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior... 1 Timothy 2:1-3

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” Revelation 7:16-17
Thank you for praying for Venezuela’s desperate children!

The Children’s Prayer Bulletin seeks to encourage intercession for at-risk and in-crisis children, youth and their families all over the world. Thank you for participating in the restoration of the Earth’s most vulnerable communities through prayer. Information contained in the Bulletin may not come from any one source or agency. To receive the Bulletin in Spanish in your inbox, write to **eneidarr19@gmail.com**. Write to **ayharvey62@aol.com** to receive the bulletin in English or German.

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES



Dedicated to children who hear their Father's voice

— By Rachel Estes, CCTI Summer Intern

She flips through a small photo album, laminated pages stuffed with pieces of her history with bright images of family and friends and Syrian culture.

“Syria was my home for all my life,” she says. “I loved it so much, but I would never want to go back.” She tries to catch the tears as they roll down her cheeks. Half a world away from war zones and life-threatening danger, the memories crossed the border with her.

Only 19 years young, Sara* has seen and endured far more in the last six years than many will face in a lifetime. At age 13, with little more than the clothes on her back, she fled toward shelter and safety with her parents and siblings. The civil war in Syria had seared their innocence, robbed them of the gifts of childhood, their village, and their home. If they stayed, their lives would be taken from them, too. There was no other choice.

They found refuge in Lebanon, in a camp full of villagers like themselves. They were victims of war, displaced from their homes, and many of them traumatized by the things they witnessed. Refugees, all asking the same impending question: **Where will we end up?**

Sara’s family waited nearly three years for clearance to permanently resettle in Canada—a relatively short process compared to most.

A 14-hour plane ride transported them to their new home and a new “normal.” Sara and her sisters remember it as a long and surreal journey.

A new set of challenges met them: learning a new language and the ins-and-outs of a wholly foreign culture, catching up on years’ worth of education while the children were still young enough to be enrolled in school, searching for employment, and little-by-little learning how to call Canada “home.”

Their story is one among thousands.

According to *The Huffington Post*, nearly 52,000 Syrian refugees have been resettled in Canada since October 2015. Each one faces the same challenges..

Each one in search of freedom, security, opportunity for a better life, a safe place for their children to play—gifts that most in the Western world already possess but take for granted.

With such a warm invitation, many of them, like Sara and her family, are putting down roots there with an eagerness, grateful to once again have something to hope in and a place to call home. ■

* Names have been withheld to protect the family’s privacy.
Shared with permission.



Rachel has been CCTI’s intern for the summer of 2018. She is a senior in the School of Communication and Digital Content at Liberty University, where she is studying journalism and photography. She plans to work in the travel/outdoor magazine industry after finishing her coursework this December.



God is Our Refuge

— Natalie Flickner

In her book, Psalm 91: *God’s Umbrella of Protection*, Peggy Joyce Ruth shares a story from her childhood that sweetly portrays God as our refuge. At the beginning of her story, at a beautiful lake secluded in the forest, she along with her mother, father, and brother all climbed into a small boat. Once they were fishing, the weather quickly turned. Dark clouds rolled in, rain drops began to fall, and large hail descended. Her father quickly ran the boat ashore. Without any shelter in sight, her father told the family to lay on the ground one beside the other. Then he quickly pulled a tarp from the bottom of the boat and laid the tarp over his family with his arm also over them.

As the storm raged on, Peggy recalls “yet I could think of nothing else but how it felt to have my dad’s arm around us. There was a certain calm under the protective shield my father provided that is hard to explain now. In fact, I had never felt as safe and secure in my entire life. I remember thinking I wished the storm would

last forever.” Peggy’s powerful experience that day taught her about the radical refuge that God can be for all His children.

Psalm 91:1-2 says, “Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’”

God is our shelter in times of trouble.

God is our Most High God, sovereign over every detail of our lives.

God is our protection and comfort when the storms of life rage against us.

God is our refuge, the safest and best place to be.

God is our fortress, not even our enemies can penetrate the safety and peace He forms in and around us.

Are you experiencing trouble today? Perhaps, trouble is raining down on you in all areas of your life? Don’t delay, run and hide in His arms. He has all the provisions already prepared for you. Run and expect His warmth and unwavering friendship. His fellowship and joy are able to make you forget the storm outside. ■



Natalie Flickner is an associate missionary with World Evangelism for Christ (WEC) serving as a part of Crisis Care Training International (CCTI). She graduated with a BA in both Intercultural Studies and Bible from Columbia International University. Then she continued studying at Columbia Biblical Seminary and earned an MA in Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Formation.

Natalie has ministered with CCTI since 2013. Her role at CCTI is Disability Coordinator and Trainer. Under this role she has written a module for CCTI curriculum called “Restoring Hope to Children with Disabilities”.

This module is being used worldwide to educate caregivers. She also speaks at conferences regarding the current worldwide state of children with disability. She uses her personal experience of living with mild cerebral palsy in both her writing and speaking engagements. Natalie also trains caregivers of children in crisis through CCTI online courses. She lives with her husband, Kevin, in South Carolina.

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bring healing and
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In What Happens After #MeToo, Dr. Laila talks about how the secret of having been sexually harassed or assaulted raises all kinds of questions, both about the secret itself and the secrecy surrounding it: Why would anyone who has been sexually harassed or assaulted keep this a secret? Why wouldn't they report it immediately? Who is the predator and what does he or she look like? What are the signs of abuse, assault, or harassment? What are the consequences? And finally, how can we protect our kids?



**This November, Take a Stand for
Vulnerable Kids & Families**

On the second Sunday in November, thousands of individuals and churches across the world will take a stand for orphans and vulnerable children.



For Information On:

• **CCTI Curriculum—**

**Offering Healing and Hope
for Children in Crisis**

• **Other Resources**

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