



## Report from Iraq Message Notes, October 16, 2016

The brunt of Keith's message was a report of his trip to Iraq with Eric Kennedy, Phil Webb and Nathan Hudson. Please continue to keep Nathan in prayer as he is still overseas scouting out future mission opportunities. He is involved with the Timothy Group (a local group that focuses on discipleship and training for missions - <http://timothygroup.org>).

The main purpose of the trip was to connect with Frontier Alliance International (FAI) - <http://www.faimission.org>. This is the ministry of Dalton and Anna in northern Iraq and our purpose was to see how we could support, encourage, and determine what the needs of the area/ministry are. Already a clear need is to provide medical supplies and training to the front line. There are over 7,000 soldiers, no trained medics with them, and a "field hospital" consisting of two beds. Most soldiers die from lack of basic medical supplies and knowledge of how to stop bleeding from bullet wounds.

Thanks to CCC's response last weekend, the team was able to give over \$13,000 for medical kits. While there, Nathan and team provided training on basic first aid. There are plans for several young men who are EMTs to go to Iraq and assist these soldiers.

FAI is open about being a Christian organization. Why is FAI focusing on supporting soldiers? The Kurdish society is based on shame and honor; by honoring soldiers they are building goodwill among all the Kurdish people. The Kurds love Americans and what FAI is doing, however, they are deeply entrenched in their own beliefs. This will not be a quick work.

Who are some of the key people the team met?

- General Afandi – came out of retirement to help lead this army
- Khaleel and Ameena Saeed – have rescued over 100 Yazidi's from ISIS captivity, recognized by US State Department as a HERO (<http://www.tipheroes.org/ameena-saeed-hasan/>)
- Free Methodist Pastors: Weam and Ahmed
- Refugees
  - The numbers are staggering: 20,000 at the Ba'adre Refugee Camp, not including the squatters outside of the camps.
  - Most will stay in the camps until younger generation comes along since they won't return to land defiled by ISIS (shame/honor society).
  - Pastor Keith described meetings in three homes in the camps outside of the refugee center, where life is even harder since no official aid comes to them.
    - Older men are killed
    - Boys (5-6 years old even) are indoctrinated into ISIS
    - Women and girls sold as sex slaves
    - Boys are taught to act handicapped to avoid capture by ISIS, three teens who are actually handicapped were severely beaten because ISIS soldiers did not believe them, Pastor Ahmed has a burden to care for these young men.
    - Many girls are committing suicide because they lack any human hope in this world. Due to their shame/honor society they have no hope of ever marrying once they have been violated.

Is God at work? Yes! Keith told story of one girl who had a recurring dream of a black snake appearing and threatening to kill her. Pastor Ahmed told her to pray and ask Jesus for help before she went to bed. Three nights Jesus came into the dream. On the third night Jesus crushed the head of the snake! The girl is now a believer and will be baptized soon. It is reported that many Muslims are having dreams that lead them to salvation.



Keith challenged us with a quote from McManus who says, “The center of God’s will is NOT the safest place to be.” From an eternal perspective, it is true that being in God’s will is the safest place to be. However, Jesus did not ask the Father to take us out of the world, but rather asked for:

- Disciples to continue Jesus’ mission.
- Protection, not isolation or insulation.
- Jesus sends us into world that hates us and against an enemy who wants to destroy us.
- Jesus prays for protection ...
  - Not necessarily from physical harm or death.
  - Unity of believers.
  - Keeping the faith (not abandoning truth).
  - So that we would not conform to the world around us.

How will you respond?

- Come to watch Covenant and Controversy Part 2: The City of the Great King on Saturday, November 5 at 6:30 pm at CCC.
- Pray – one church member, Hannah Coiner, has committed to praying for 30 days over these specific areas:
  - The Lord's protection while they fight ISIS
  - That Kurds and the people within ISIS would find Jesus (hearing about people learning of Jesus through visions and dreams)
  - Pray for girls/women who are sold into the sex-trafficking industry or used by ISIS.
  - Pray for boys who would be used as soldiers. Pray that the Lord would protect their minds.
  - Pray for friends who are in the middle east serving right now to spread the gospel. Pray for their hearts to continue to be soft for the people they serve. Pray against loneliness. Pray for HOPE.
  - Give. There are medical teams doing work right now. Let me know, I can hook you up with a way to support this vital work.
- Was your heart touched by the refugees (those in the camps, but also those scraping by outside of the camps)? How about the scattered seeds of new churches rising up as a direct result of persecution?
- How desperate are you for God? In your everyday, practical life are you trusting in your human effort, the work of your own hands, the systems of the world? Do you, deep down, know your great need for Christ?
- Are you “on mission” for Christ? God may not be calling you to Iraq, but He has placed you here and now for a reason (Acts 17:26), are you willing to pay the price? Where is God asking you to step forward in boldness and courage?