

## **Muslim Ban**

Many of you have no doubt heard about the so-called “Muslim ban” that went into effect this weekend. Since Iraq is one of the countries listed in the ban, many have been asking me what I think and how this will affect the ministry of Light of Life, so I wanted to address the situation.

### ***What do I think personally?***

Make no mistake about it. This ban, even though it is temporary (right now), will make it harder for me to serve God in Iraq. I want to be very clear about something. I do not have to serve in the capacity I am serving in now. I have chosen the path of *most* resistance because I believe God has called me to it. I could easily have a larger ministry if I spent my time bashing Islam instead of trying to reach Muslims in Iraq. There is a real appetite among some believers for this type of ministry. I see it all the time as I visit churches in America. Christians are scared of Islam and they want someone to tell them their fears are well founded.

To be honest, I am past that. I do not need to be warned about the dangers of Islam. My family bears the scars of Muslim religious intolerance. I, instead, intend to follow the example of my Savior, Jesus, who took the gospel to the Jews who despised Him. *My ministry is to go back to the country that kicked out my family and to those people who once despised me with the good news that Jesus can forgive them for their actions.*

I am in no way discouraged from doing what I have been doing. God called me to this ministry, and I will continue to do it until He calls me away from it no matter how dangerous it may be.

Many are wondering if this will affect my ability to travel back and forth to Iraq. The simple answer right now is...I don't know. God does. The Iraqi parliament has already called for the banning of any American citizen traveling into the country. This, of course, would mean I would not be able to go back in May as planned. It is in the Lord's hands now. It always has been.

### ***How will this affect our ministry?***

Our ministry was built for such a time as this. Being an Iraqi-American, I know exactly how unstable Iraq is. That is why we use nationals to build churches because even in the middle of all the instability and insanity that is Iraq, our model allows us to march on with the message of Christ. I had great reservations about our ministry model when we began. Time and again it has proven to be blessed by God. In a country where persecution of Christians is #2 in the world, we continue to serve the God of the Bible.

It is my belief that missions needs two essential elements. First, it must be done in the middle of unreached people. Iraq certainly qualifies. Second, the ultimate goal is the planting of churches among those people. If a Muslim gets saved, there must be a place for him to go, to grow and to unite with other believers. That place is the church. That is God's plan. That is why we work hand in hand with national church planters to help them start and build up communities of believers.

This ban will not affect that. We will continue to witness to Muslims in Iraq and disciple them through our churches.

### ***What should our response be biblically?***

To answer this question we have to look directly at what the Bible says. Jesus did not mince words when He said, *"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."*

Jesus was a king. Kings do not make suggestions, they make decrees. We are obligated to love Muslims and to pray for them. This is not optional.

I believe this is an opportunity. The churches which support our ministry have not been shy about showing their love to Muslims in Iraq. Countless refugees have received heat, clothing, food, and a gospel witness because of what you have done. We do much to help refugees. Sometimes people accuse me of doing too much. I do not apologize for helping the poor or feeding the needy. It is my duty as an ambassador of God. It also opens the door to witness.

The book of Matthew gives a stark reminder of how God views those in need in chapter 25:

*"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."*

Did you catch that? Jesus identifies with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger...and not just in this country. To help a refugee is to give directly to Christ.

### ***What does that mean for Christians?***

I want to thank you for all you have done to help Muslims by supporting our ministry. I want you to know you can stand before Jesus and know that you were among those who helped feed and clothe the needy. However, I ask you to continue the fight. Remember, not until we get to Heaven will the battle against Satan be over. So, I ask you to do three things:

#### **Pray.**

Pray for those refugees who are hurting. Pray for those who are confused. Pray for those who feel hated. Pray that they will feel the love of God, and pray that showing that love will lead to acceptance of the good news.

#### **Study.**

Don't buy into media clips or internet stories about what is going on. Look to the Scriptures to guide you. Make your decisions on what God says, not on what your favorite broadcaster thinks. Maybe when you opened this email you thought I would be addressing politics. I did not because I am not a politician. I am a missionary. I am an ambassador of the Kingdom of God and, as such, my main priority is to represent Christ.

#### **Examine.**

Search your heart. We say all the time that God is in control. We do not often act like it. *If any part of your spirit is controlled by fear or hate toward refugees, I can assure you that was not put there by God.*

**- Irfan Abdullatif**

#### **Our mailing address is:**

Light of Life International  
P.O. Box 283  
Hazel Park, MI 48044