



THE HAYNES

MISSIONARIES TO IRAQI KURDISTAN



Ministry Update

New Excitement

The Kurdish family that was saved and baptized (see May - June 2024 Prayer Letter) has caught on fire in the service of the Lord. They have been reaching out to unbelievers using social media, texting their family members and sharing the Gospel face-to-face (one of the most dangerous methods a former Muslim can employ). They desire to see everyone they know and everyone they don't know accept Christ as their Savior. It is a joy to see that new passion for the Gospel and it has ignited other believers in the church with the same desire. These new converts love the teaching of the Bible, and we go to their village each week for discipleship class.

Continuing Hope

We love our church! Light of Life Baptist Church is made up of the poor, the hurt, the disaffected and the outcasts of society.

One of our faithful visitors is an older man who has worn out his welcome in every church in town. He has selected our church as the place he attends. In truth, it can only be the moving of the Holy Spirit on him that keeps him coming to our church. He has many suggestions for us on how we can improve our worship service, our closing prayer, our opening Scripture reading as well as numerous suggestions for my preaching both before and after the service. By now there ought to be a picture forming in your mind of the experience that this brother brings with him to each service. Despite the rejection of all (not an exaggeration) of his suggestions and several verbal corrections I have had to deliver he keeps coming back. I have concluded that even though he does not get what he wants he is getting exactly what he needs - **a church that loves him.** He drives the members crazy and yet they are gentle in their words and welcome

Continuing Hope cont...

him every time he shows up. It is our prayer that he will become a member. Please pray for this brother in Christ. Pray also that God will grant me the patience and grace necessary not to wish that I had held him under the baptismal waters just a second or two longer.

There are two unbelievers that attend our church with some regularity. They enjoy the fellowship of the believers, and they are treated with love that they do not experience anywhere else. Their salvation is our constant request to the Lord. Both have heard the Gospel from the pulpit, from their friends and family (who attend the church) as well as hearing the Gospel face-to-face from church leadership. We have been praying for their salvation for a little over two years now. What a victory it would be and what rejoicing the church would experience upon hearing of their salvation. Please pray for the salvation of Miss "R" and Mr. "H."

It is a privilege to serve the Lord and we are so grateful to each of you who make it possible for us to minister to the people that we love.

As always, we ask for your prayers that God would make us effective in the ministry of the Gospel.



Matt & Apryl Haynes
(405) 468 - 6500
news@kurdishmissions.org

Sending Church
Maranatha Baptist Church
2800 N Divis, Bethany, OK 73008



The Wife's Perspective

The Tender Phases of Ministry

Now that we are well-settled into our second term, I thought this might be a good time to write this letter – just a practical help to understanding the needs and experiences of a first term missionary. Though I'm not sure of the exact statistics, my understanding is that the highest rate of missionaries that leave the field do so just after the first furlough, before returning for that second term.

The period after a missionary's first term is indeed a tender time. You have spent your first few years endeavoring to adapt to the culture, to the language, to being away from your family and everything you know. Your routines have changed and you're noticing a shift in how you communicate. Even the practical things have been upended such as how you shop, prepare your food, greet people appropriately on the sidewalk, follow protocol when visiting homes, and countless other small things. There are a million tiny nuances and intricacies between your American culture and the new one you're striving to adopt. All of this while going through culture shock, missing your family, your church, and your way of life.

Then suddenly, it's time to go on furlough. It's time to shed the skin you've grown from all the adaptation you've forced on your mind and body, put the old familiar one back on, and return to your roots. You think this will be easy. It's what you're used to! Like a duck to water. But when you arrive back in your beloved homeland, you feel jarringly foreign. You don't fit here anymore, and you don't yet fit where you are serving yet either. *Am I doing this right? Did I say that right? Do my clothes look weird or dated?* You catch yourself doing little things from your new culture and on the one hand it's sort of a precious feeling because it ties you to the people God's called to you. On the other hand, you're concerned about how you're being perceived. *Is it obvious I feel a little out of place here?* More like a fish out of water than a duck to water.

After a few months of furlough, you start settling back into the comforts of your homeland. You've finally experienced the warm embrace of your family, maybe been part of a holiday celebration with loved ones. You've experienced the fellowship of churches in your own language and enjoyed singing hymns you've known since childhood. Your American communication skills have resurfaced, and you are finally feeling more comfortable in your own skin. And now it's time to go back to the field. The prospect can be daunting. This seems to be the common experience of so many missionaries.

After nine years on the field, Matt and I are experiencing our best time in ministry so far. Though we will always be foreigners here, this is home now. There will be fresh challenges in the future, but we are over the initial humps that all missionaries seem to face in their first couple terms. Hindsight has made clear some of the needs we faced getting to where we are now, but maybe you have some missionaries that are currently in this initial phase. Your missionaries are just people – people trying to do what you're doing, but in a new land and new cultural format. I think one of the best ways you can be a friend to missionaries is simply by knowing to pray for them during tender transitions such as that first furlough and first return to the field. As always, we desire your prayers, we are so thankful for your steady love and support, and God bless your efforts where you serve Him.

Apryl Haynes