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Greetings Mission Friends,

Christmas is right around the corner. We prepare our hearts for remembrance of our Lord Savior's birth. In this preparation, we walk in faith with high hopes to make the love of Christ known to others in the New Year as well. We marvel at this time and can see new friends in faith witness the wonder of the arrival of a Savior King. One of these friends named Parisa is precious to us, and here is her story.

Unlike other refugees, Parisa was not living in Iran and did not flee for religious persecution as a Christian. She was living in an advanced Middle Eastern country with a very good life. In addition to Farsi/Persian, she spoke Arabic and English. She had a good life. However, she married a non-Iranian man and everything changed. Shortly after their marriage, she became pregnant and had a little boy. In the Mid-East culture, boys are favored over girls. Because she was not Arab (Sunni Muslim), her mother-in-law demanded her to surrender the baby to the in-laws for upbringing. As an Iranian, she was Shia Muslim and began to experience religious persecution, not from the government, but from her in-law family. Her life was threatened by her in-laws. And the story began.



Parisa and son after Baptism



Parisa & Cecils

Parisa, her husband and child all fled their very comfortable life with house, cars and jobs. God had something special in mind for Parisa. Not an easy life. During the transit out of the Middle East, her husband was separated from her and not able to make the final step to safety in Germany. Initially, Parisa flew into Leipzig and remained with friends until she requested asylum. After requesting asylum, she was directed to Chemnitz to live in the refugee camp. There she met the "Great Inviter" (name withheld) from the Lutheran refugee church in Chemnitz.

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In August 2018, she was brought to a Taufunterricht (Baptism instruction). We asked her why she came, and she said that she was just checking things out. She had very little interest in Christianity. However, she was curious about this new religion and the people who came to learn about Jesus Christ. She sensed that there was something different than she had experienced with her former Muslim religious experiences. She was at peace.

Over the year, she overcame living in a tiny village with few conveniences. She lived in a very small “Wohnung” or apartment on the 5th floor with a 2-year-old and no elevator. She overcame travel to our refugee church of nearly 2 hours each way by public transportation. Parisa and her son were baptized in May along with 15 other Iranians. She is working hard to re-unite with her husband, who is not able to join her at this time. Parisa said that her husband has no money and cannot move to Germany due to financial and political difficulties. In her struggles now, she has the comfort of a new friend named Jesus Christ.

Her story is not over, it is only just beginning. Recently she got a major upgrade in her Wohnung that tripled her living space and put her on the second floor. Upon completion of her Baptism, Pfarrer Dittmer instructed her to find a church close to her Wohnung, so she could easily worship every week and participate in other activities. Not only did she find a church, she found devoted believers to pray with and hold weekly Bible studies. We were recently invited to lead her weekly Bible study, and we were so impressed with the changes in Parisa that we saw. We can only surmise that the Holy Spirit is working hard to ensure that Parisa grows in faith and trust.

Parisa’s story is like many others where the Holy Spirit is touching her life in ways that flow from God’s Word. We see the impact and blessings that God has bestowed on her and so many others. We thank our supporters for making this mission possible so that God’s saving grace in Christ alone might be celebrated in this “gut Nachricht” or Good Story. *Gott segne euch!*

Prayers:

- For health and healing of our good friend John, who recently underwent brain surgery.
- For continued success of the Iranian/Afghan refugee mission here in Dresden and Chemnitz.
- For safety of our refugee friend’s brother, who has been imprisoned in Istanbul.
- For a positive finding at the recent asylum hearing for our friend Ashkan.
- For faithful witness of Iranians and Afghans who invite friends to worship & bring lost generations of cold war German neighbors back to the hope found only in Jesus.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. John 14:27, **ESV**

In Christ Our Peace,

Carl & Karen Cecil



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