

July 15, 2018

Brian & Malisa Ellis - Serving with Cru in Boston

Change Boston



She looked up at me with kind, tired eyes

We've just got back to Boston after our summer in the Middle East. And, of course, we wish each one of you were there with us in person, to experience some of the amazing ways the Lord moved. The best we can do today is an audio diary. Here's a short clip of me (Malisa) sharing with our students one morning to help refresh the vision for why we were helping serve our new refugee friends in the Middle East. I wanted our students to see how significant their presence was this summer.

Here's what I shared. You can listen online at <http://brianandmalisa.com/2018/07/malisas-audio-diary/> you'll need the password: "Breakthrough" We've also included a picture from a picnic we helped throw for our refugee friends at a park towards the end of our time.

She looked up at me with kind, tired eyes as the tea was being passed around the room at the moms and tots program. It was very Afghani: she had darker colored skin but lighter colored eyes. I sat by her and, with a translator, we started talking and I got to hear this women's story.

"How many kids do you have?" "Ten," she said, and then opened her purse and pulled out a stack of identification cards, one for each child. She went on to share that she actually has 13 kids, but 3 of them had died in the war in Afghanistan: an 18-year-old, an 8-year-old and a 4-year-old were all killed in the war. She started tearing up as she was talking, **"I miss them. I miss them so much"** she said over and over very slowly.

I started tearing up just thinking about the pain this mother was experiencing after losing 3 kids in Afghanistan.

"Three of my daughters are still in Kabul. Two are married. One is a veterinarian, one is a dentist, and one is a lawyer. The other seven are here with me."

"You should be very proud. You raised very strong daughters," I said, which obviously in that culture is a big thing.

"Yes, I really pushed school so that they could be educated and have a good career but now, my kids cannot go to school."

"Why not?" "Well, because they have to work to help pay for living expenses, so they can't go to school. My older girls have to work because it is so expensive in this city." She and her kids left Afghanistan because it was a hard and awful life to move to the city which was better for her even as a refugee than it was at home in Kabul.

Almost as a P.S. in our conversation, I found out that her husband was killed in the war in Afghanistan too. She is here in this city by herself with seven kids. **I couldn't absorb any more pain or hard things from her life.** My heart was breaking.

The translator got pulled away, but at the end, I said, "Will you be at the picnic?" "Yes," she said as I pointed to the paper invitation at our table. There are these powerful, really hard stories as we enter in to serve in the refugee program this summer.

I reminded our team of students as we gathered the morning following my time with this dear Afghani woman: "Maybe you are just pouring tea, or building blocks with little kids, or trying to keep them quiet while the bible story is happening. But this is one of the only times this mom gets a break all week long. She comes and just sits, we pour tea, and her kids get both physical and spiritual food. So, as the tea and wafer cookies were offered that morning my new friends passed on the tea but grabbed a huge handful of the wafer cookies. Honestly, I was a little bit surprised at how many she grabbed but she looked shyly at me and then walked over to her children who were sitting on the rug. She didn't eat any of them. Maybe it was because she was fasting for Ramazan or maybe not. Either way her kids were hungry and so she did what any mom would do and found her children food."

I think it's significant just **the ministry of being present** with our refugee friends even if we don't get to hear more stories, just literally being present as a team sitting at the table and holding their babies, playing with their kids, and offering a cup of tea. I think it's a really significant part of what we're doing in the city this summer. So that's the story. I wanted to tell you guys because that's one of 40 Afghani stories we could tell but this one grabbed my heart.

Will you pray for my friend and her 10 children? Will you especially pray for her two teenage daughters who are not in school but working in order to help provide for her family's needs. I met them at the picnic we helped put on - at the face painting station of all places. I spent a good chunk of time at that picnic painting wild designs on sun kissed skin which meant I was able to hold the faces of these refugee kids and pray that in the midst of all the brokenness in their worlds that the security of Jesus would begin to take root.

Loving our Adventurous Lord,

Brian & Malisa

Prayer Requests

- For my friend and her 10 children.
- For her 2 teenage daughters who are not in school but are working to provide for her family's needs.
- For Brian and me as we prepare for students returning to Boston in a month



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