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A World in Shambles

BY VALERIE SIGAMANI

“Run! Run! Run!” said Victoria’s brother. She looked back in fear, thinking that perhaps her speed was not quick enough to outrun her abuser. She then realized she was far ahead and the bushes around her concealed her location very well. Breathing deeply, she began to take slower steps, as she felt a sharp pain in her feet. She discovered that pieces of rocks and twigs had burrowed into her skin. She looked away and squinched her nose as she plucked them out of her foot. “There is a long way to go,” she thought in her mind, “1,479 miles.”

This is the story of too many youth today that are living in war zones and crime-ridden cities, a phenomenon that is not just in Syria, but in Africa, Asia, and Central and South America. The world is in shambles, and it’s up to the people of God to do something.

I think many of us are desiring a deeper religion, one that does not just constitute Bible reading and church attending — one that is more than a culture, rather a deep-seated conviction that feeds our souls. As we watch the news in despair for those on the other side of our screen, we ask, “What can we do?” I have good news. True religion constitutes action.

The disciples came to Jesus as he leaned upon the well. “Teacher, eat!” they said. Jesus responded, *I have food to eat that you know nothing about . . . My food . . . is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work*” (John 4:32, 34 NIV).

Jesus was trying to teach the disciples a lesson of gospel-work and true religion. True religion requires loving action. God knew it would not be sufficient for us to just *read* about salvation, but the full meal is to partake in the *work* of salvation. This is the *food* Jesus spoke of — to share salvation with

a woman who was regarded as unclean, a stranger and a sinner because, in his eyes, he saw a woman that had potential to change the world, become strong and be his disciple.

For Victoria, thankfully she managed to find a refugee camp. Since this 17-year-old was without family, without a home, she was able to apply for a family in a safe country to take her in as a foster child.

I’ve dealt with many refugees, like Victoria, who are coming to the United States. We can react in two ways: we can reject them by keeping them at arm’s distance, or we can embrace them like God called us to do. *And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt* (Deuteronomy 10:19 NIV).

Then, we could take this opportunity to share God’s message with them. It is a cross-cultural mission, no doubt, but it’s a call that Jesus has given to us as food for our souls.

Valerie Sigamani, an Andrews University graduate student, works with Bethany Christian Services in Southwest Michigan. She is currently working in its refugee program where she matches refugee youth with volunteers that will support and guide them in their new life in the United States.

Valerie received a \$100 scholarship for this article. If you’re between the ages of 14–30 and have a personal story of faith and/or want to challenge your peers and/or the church, please email your submission to: herald@lakeunion.org.

