

## Welcoming Faiz and Nawal to the UK

FRRME is welcoming Faiz, curate at St George's, Baghdad and his wife Nawal, head of the Baghdad Mother's Union from June 27 until July 11

If you would like to host them, please contact the office on  
01730 267673  
or email us at: [office@frrme.org](mailto:office@frrme.org)

Please see Andrew's speaking engagements (on the right) for details of where you can hear Andrew and Faiz speaking.

Dear friends,

### Reflecting on this last month



Through the holy season of Lent and into Easter, I got to thinking about our call to follow the way of Jesus.

It does not matter if we are here in Iraq or in the safety of the West; we are called to do radical things for Jesus. To show radical grace. To be radical Christians.

In the context of our reconciliation work that means being as radical in our pursuit of peace as others are radical in their pursuit of war.

While there were violent attacks against churches during Easter it was nowhere near as bad as expected and, mercifully, no Christians were killed. We thank G-d for this answered prayer.

### Meeting needs

The primary needs of the people we serve in Iraq include healthcare, food, education and accommodation. And so, as a charity, we do our best to provide.

We have a clinic with doctors, dentists, a pharmacy and laboratory. We see over 100 patients a day.

Each week, thousands of local people most in need are given groceries to see them through.

We have a thriving Sunday school and have nearly finished building a school on our compound.

And when people cannot afford their rent we help them to pay it.



We do it because of our faith. It means that all those who receive our help - many of whom are not Christians - see it as the love of the church and thus the love of G-d. Much of my work involves peacemaking between senior religious leaders. But this humanitarian relief is grassroots reconciliation.

### **'Perfect love casts out all fear'**

I have never worn body armour in the Church, I have always refused.

So many of our brothers and sisters here in Baghdad have been killed, kidnapped or tortured even in the last few months.

The persecution of our people is worse than anything we read in the Bible. A matter of months ago 58 people were gunned down and killed during worship at the Syrian Catholic Church just down the road from ours here in Baghdad.

In the weeks that followed, attacks against Christians soared and many more were killed, including our own staff and church members.



The members of St George's have lost everything. Yet we are a happy church. When you've lost everything you realise that Yesua (as we call Jesus) is all you have left.

I myself have had the difficulties that come with having Multiple Sclerosis. But when G-d wants you to something, he will provide. Having MS played a part in getting me here and plays a part in me having no fear for my own life.

I had no intention of coming to Iraq but I came 13 years ago and now there is nowhere in the world I'd rather be. I am where G-d wants me to be. He gives us the joy to be where he has called us and provides the resources we need to do the work he calls us to do.

In the midst of terror and persecution we cope because our Lord is with us. He sustains us and gives us hope.

The threats here are real, but we are not afraid. We do not live in fear when we are filled with the gifts of G-d's Holy Spirit. We are surrounded by G-d's love and the love of his people. The love is perfect and 'perfect love casts out all fear'.

## **In the face of persecution**

We have just been looking at the miraculous catch of fish in John 21, when the disciples caught 153 fish. 153 is an important number, since at the time it was said there were 153 types of fish. The catch thus represented that the Kingdom of G-d was big enough for everyone.

Finally Jesus tells Peter that one day he would be persecuted and killed for his faith but still he should follow him. Here in Baghdad that is a clear word to us all.

Many of our people have been persecuted and killed for their love of Jesus. Still we are called to follow him. We do not know whether we will survive another day but we do know that, whatever happens, our Lord will be with us.

## **G-d TV**

We have recently had G-d TV spend a few days with us. So for three days our political work was placed on hold and we concentrated on the wonderful diversity of our church ministry, from our youth and children's work to the women's work and finally the whole church.

The crew said it was the most incredible place they'd been to. I asked them for their highlight. They all said the same thing. The most amazing thing was the people; people who'd seen such persecution and yet this crew could see the Lord in their eyes and the Glory of G-d in this place.

## **Visas**

The situation with visas is looking increasingly difficult. I don't fear the guns, bombs and bullets here. But I do fear not being able to get back in. Please pray.

Grace and peace,

*Andrew*

[Canon Andrew White](#)