

The Badge of Shame

What do these pictures have in common?

If you guessed the three are identity markers of a religious belief or tradition you would be correct. The yellow star is most remembered as being used by the Nazis to mark Jews in Europe from 1938-1945. The middle picture, the words of Joshua 24:15, appears frequently in homes of Christians in the USA.



The third picture is of the letter “n” in Arabic, pronounced “noon”. This symbol gained notoriety when ISIS captured the Iraqi city of Mosul in June 2014. Thousands of Christians fled with their lives; the vast majority with only the clothes on their back and what they could carry by hand as their homes and property were confiscated by ISIS.



Red spray-painted “noons” appeared on the walls surrounding Christian homes and businesses indicating that everything within the walls was now the property of ISIS. The red “noon” was painted on any Christian wall whether the person was Catholic, Orthodox, or Evangelical.

The use of associating the letter “noon” has its origin in the Quran. In this book Christians are referred to “nassrah”. The word comes from “Nazareth” and is the term for Christians.

The “noon” is a sobering reminder that we should

store up our treasures in heaven with the reminder in Hebrews 10:34 that we may not be able to keep the ones on earth anyway: *You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.*

Originally, these Christians fled to the Kurdish area in northern Iraq, but many have come to Jordan seeking safety.

These Christians are living as refugees with the hope that one day they will be able to immigrate to Europe, Australia, or Canada. At this time, the U.S. is not open to these Iraqis wanting to immigrate.

While in Jordan, refugees are not allowed to work legally and it goes without saying they are not allowed to apply for citizenship. So how do they survive?

In general, refugees survive off of their savings, working illegally, relatives wiring them money, charity, or even by illicit means such as prostitution. It's a very hard life when one has been forced from their home, their neighborhood, their culture and forced to live in places where they are sometimes looked down upon and have no hope for settling in.

Schooling is also a challenge. While Jordanian public Jordanian public schools are open to Syrian children, of which nearly all are Muslim, however the atmosphere is generally not friendly as their presence exacerbates the already crowded classrooms and the feeling from poorer Jordanians that the refugees are taking charity meant for them.

Iraqi Christian children generally have an easier time as nearly all Catholic, Orthodox, and Evangelical schools allow these children to attend elementary school at a reduced financial level. Yet, most of these children have do not go onto the high school due to the increased expense.

This is where the “noon project” is allowing some twenty Iraqi Christians to earn a living wage. The driver of the project is an Iraqi housewife who has an

art background and is an experienced mosaic craftsman This lady has taught other Iraqis, most of whom are below 25 in age, how to make mosaics thus teaching them a trade. Her husband is serving as the project manager.

While the “noons” are made in different colors, red has been the predominant color. Culturally Arabs tend to like red while many Americans feel it is a harsh color and thus these “noons” I felt would be harder to sell. So I asked why they made so many of them red. Their response took my breath away! The reason is because when ISIS painted the “noon” on their property, they were “red noons”. Thus, the color in and of itself significantly reminds them of their lost treasures in this world.

Prayer Requests

1. For those involved in the project that more markets to sell the “noons” can be find so they can continue to earn money so to afford their living expenses.
2. That they might be accepted for immigration.
3. For their spiritual lives and they would grow in Christ while in Jordan.

Pictures of some of the Mosaic Makers

