

[Day #11] The Blessing of ISIS
Read: Psalm 94:16-19

As our van bumped along a winding road through the Iraqi countryside, my new Iraqi friend, Fada, and I conversed about many things. Finally I warmed to my favorite subject, “So, how did you come to know Jesus?”

Fada’s story starts in Baghdad, where she was born and raised. Married now with two sons, she and her family were forced to flee Baghdad by Islamic militants called ISIS. With little more than the clothes on their backs, they landed in the Kurdish-controlled city of Erbil. Though they had been people of means before, paying for an apartment without income from a job quickly exhausted their resources. So it was that on the first day that they couldn’t cover their rent, their landlord put them out immediately.

“I couldn’t believe we were kicked out and living on the street!” Fada said. “I was so angry at God! Why would He allow us to be in such a shameful situation? But by the second day my anger was replaced with fear and desperation. We had already contacted every friend or family member we knew and had no one else to call.

“On the second day, a stranger approached us and asked why we were on the street. When we told him he said, ‘Why stay on the streets? My church will help you.’

“So we followed this man we didn’t know to his church. These strangers took us in and treated us more kindly than our own friends and family! Soon my boys and I started attending services, which is how I found Christ.”

Though her story differed in detail, it contained a common thread I had been hearing in other faith stories from Iraqi and Syrian Christians. The common thread is that it was through the dreadful situations caused by ISIS and Muslim-on-Muslim violence that they found eternal life in Christ. I had heard this so frequently that I had started to think of ISIS, as outrageous as it sounds, as a great “evangelist”!

Wanting to try out the term on Fada, I said, “So, maybe we could say that ISIS is a great—,” and at this point, to my utter surprise, she completed my thought with, “—blessing”.

Yes, her family’s losses were deep and real, but she could honestly affirm that ISIS was a “blessing” because ISIS chased them straight to the church and the waiting arms of her Savior.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Describe a time in your life when you saw God use a negative, unjust, or even evil situation or event to, in the end, bless you or someone else. What was the good that He brought about in the end?

Is this the same as saying that catalyst – the unjust or evil thing itself – is good? Explain.