Terry and Melissa Rhodes:

Melissa and Terry Rhodes lived in Bethlehem for seven years. Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus Christ, is today a town of around 60,000 souls. Surrounded by conflict, a cement barrier wall, three refugee camps, and four checkpoints, Bethlehem is politically and economically challenged. Terry and Melissa encouraged the local Christians through work in Christian education. Terry worked in the educational field, both secular and Christian education, for over 18 years, both in the States and in Bethlehem. For five years he served as a high school principal of a Christian school in Bethlehem, and two years he helped to open a new Christian school in the Bethlehem area, Melissa taught high school English, Bible classes, fitness classes, and pre-school classes while living in Bethlehem. Their goals were to encourage the local believers and to reach out to the broader Bethlehem Muslim community and share the hope of Jesus Christ.

Outreach in the Bethlehem area consisted of home visits to local poor families, helping at local orphanages, schools for blind and handicapped children, and organizations for widows. They encouraged the local Christian youth to reach out to their community and encouraged the teachers to help with out- reach projects in the community. During the home visits they shared truth from the Bible about Jesus and bought groceries for the families. Many of the families were Muslim. During the time in Bethlehem and due to the proximity to Jordan, they had opportunities to visit refugee camps where many Syrian and Iraqi refugees fled ISIS.

In addition to visiting refugees in Jordan, God gave them the opportunity to travel to Iraq and visit refugees and displaced people there as well. They moved back to the United States in the summer of 2015 and have made visits to Jordan and Iraq since then visiting refugees. Their goals are: to encourage the local believers in Iraq and Jordan to continue the hard work of reaching out to the refugees there, assist the local believers and missionaries there by giving financial aid and sharing the gospel, and to inform and invite people in the States to help with the refugee crisis.

During a visit to Iraq or Jordan they will distribute aid (food, toiletries, medical supplies, etc), and to give the gospel to the refugees. They visit the tents, caravans, and apartments of the refugees, give them food and/or toiletries, pray with and for them, give them a Bible in their language, and share the good news of the gospel. Through this work they have seen Christian and Muslim background Iraqis, Syrians, Sudanese, Somalian, and many more nationalities come to know Jesus and they have been able to give much needed aid to refugees. They plan to continue to take short term trips to Iraq and Jordan every several months.

Please pray for the work; James 1:27 says, “Religion that our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” Pray for us as we serve by sharing Jesus with Muslim and Christian background refugees and reach out in the compassion of Jesus to the poor, widows, refugees, and orphans while encouraging local believers.