



Community of Christ

CHRIST'S MISSION, OUR MISSION

September 18, 2015

Your Giving Helps Syrian Refugees

All across Europe and the world we are seeing images of human suffering. We are seeing a mass migration of refugees and migrants who have been displaced from their homeland by war, persecution, and a hope for a safer place to live. This is a grave human tragedy.

The words in Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a speak loudly to this situation:

God, the Eternal Creator, weeps for the poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased of the world because of their unnecessary suffering. Such conditions are not God's will. Open your ears to hear the pleading of mothers and fathers in all nations who desperately seek a future of hope for their children. Do not turn away from them. For in their welfare resides your welfare.

The church is being called to hear and respond.

One of our responses is to be generous and give to help our sisters and brothers. **Today we announce that \$10,000 from Abolish Poverty, End Suffering will go to Save the Children, an organization that is on the ground and providing much-needed relief.**

You are invited to continue giving to the Mission Initiative of Abolish Poverty, End Suffering so we can respond as a worldwide church to this and other situations. Use your offering envelopes or visit www.CofChrist.org/give.

May God bless, guide, and strengthen you as we look for ways to respond to the urgent need.

September 14, 2015

Statement on Syrian Refugee Crisis

President Steve Veazey received the attached reflection on the Syrian refugee crisis from his friend and colleague, Alex Kahtava, leader for the World Hunger-Tangible Love Team and retired president of the Council of Twelve. President Veazey said, "Alex's poignant reflection focuses our attention on human suffering and struggle that initially may seem distant to some. Through Alex's reflection, what seemed distant becomes very close, demanding our attention and compassionate response."

We invite all Community of Christ members and friends to join us in prayer for the safety and relief of refugees involved in this mass exodus from war. We urge everyone to become more informed about what is causing this crisis and how to help resolve it. We encourage people to support efforts in various nations to peacefully welcome refugee immigrants seeking asylum.

The Presiding Bishopric is evaluating organizations that are providing relief to Syrian refugees and will be designating an amount to give to an organization selected to receive Community of Christ support. In the meantime, you can take immediate action in response to the Syrian refugee crisis by making a generous contribution to world mission tithes through the Abolish Poverty, End Suffering Mission Initiative. Use your offering envelope or visit www.CofChrist.org/give.

Watch for additional Community of Christ communications about the church's response.

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

"And a Little Child Shall Lead Them"

By Alex Kahtava, *World Hunger-Tangible Love Team*

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them...They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

—Isaiah 11:6–9 NRSV

The vision we share is God's vision of reconciliation, salvation, wholeness, justice, and peace expressed in the scriptural definition of *shalom*. Shalom means a fullness or completeness of peace. God yearns to establish a lasting covenant of peace with humankind and with all of creation.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition

In *The Journey of a People—The Era of Reorganization 1844–1946* author Mark Scherer quoted an 1874 report:

We, your committee on [the] Church Seal, respectfully submit the following design, with legend, date, and motto: "Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." Emblem, a Lion and a Lamb lying down at rest. ...A circular braided seal encompassed figures of a little child, lion, and a lamb in the foreground....

The seal has experienced several iterations since 1874, but the central figures are still present: lion, lamb, and child. The church seal is found everywhere in the church—on buildings, walls, stationery, videos, and websites. It represents in one image our hope for the peaceable kingdom.

Shattering across my television screen this past week was the photo of Aylan Kurdi on the shore in the Turkish coastal town of Bodrum. He was the 3-year-old boy who drowned,

with his brother and mother, as the family fled from the terror and destruction they—with tens of thousands—were experiencing in Syria.

The image of Aylan soon was followed with the picture of the three graves that would receive their bodies in the Syrian border town of Kobani.

Somehow Aylan and the child in the church seal have become blurred—almost one—in my mind and heart.

Is this the child that leads us to *shalom*?

Is this the child that enables us to see, as never before, the suffering and pain of a broken world?

Is this the child who—even, as one's heart is torn asunder—drives into that same broken heart a determination to continue to create pathways in the world where healing will be experienced?

Is this the child that will open our “ears to hear the pleading of mothers and fathers in all nations who desperately seek a future of hope for their children” (Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a)?

I struggle to know what to say, how to respond. What should my prayer be?

Yet, the child in the church seal is still blurred.

Is Aylan the child in the seal?