

INTERNATIONAL TEAMS

1:ONE

REFUGEE MINISTRY

ONE REDEEMED JOURNEY

Of the roughly 32 nationalities represented on our teams, ITeams is privileged to have a growing number who are from refugee-producing countries.

Life in the Ivory Coast was excellent for Nana. A successful businessman, a respected leader in his community, a ruler in his tribal culture, the husband of a loving wife, and father to a young son. His wife was a Christian, but as an ardent follower of mysticism and Eastern religions, he kept her faith well suppressed.

It all changed when political instability plunged his country into chaos. Marauding gangs of rival factions clashed and destroyed his home and his business. **Nana and his family barely escaped with their lives** and, after a long and perilous journey, found themselves in a refugee camp in Austria. **He came to The Oasis - an ITeams' ministry center for refugees** - for warm clothing, not realizing its Christian connection.

Confronted with the Gospel and the hopelessness of his situation, Nana surrendered his life to the love of Jesus Christ within weeks of his arrival. During the few years after arriving in Austria he grew tremendously in faith and spiritual depth, and in 2003 was accepted as a member of the ITeams' Oasis team. His personal experiences, combined with more recent theological studies, have given him a unique insight into the needs of refugees.



Nana (left) with fellow Oasis team member Peter (right). Nana is also featured on the new ITeams' blog at <http://blog.iteams.org>

REFUGEE STATISTICS

- There are more than 33 million forcefully displaced people world-wide - that's 1 in every 200 people on Earth (USCRI, UNHCR)
- In 2004, 52,868 of the world's refugees resettled in the US
- Afghanistan is the origin of the largest refugee population - 2.1 million. They seek asylum mainly in Pakistan, Iran, Germany, The Netherlands, and the UK (UNHCR)
- 37% of the world's refugees are living in the Middle East; 29% live in Africa; 24% in Asia/Pacific; 5% in Europe; and 5% in the Americas (USCRI)

One Desperate Prayer

There is a young woman seeking refuge. She is from a country suffering under one of the most oppressive regimes in our time. Her faith is in Jesus. She needs our prayers on her behalf now - as do those desiring to help her. I hope I can later more openly share concerning her situation. For now I ask you to pray, blind to the details. God has promised that His indwelling Spirit will help us pray...

"Father in Heaven, we lift our sister up to you. You know her situation. Be her shield... be her refuge. Stretch out your arm and open a way for her to escape those who would seek to oppress and harm her. Strike her adversaries so that they cannot see or understand. Confuse their minds and thwart their ways. Lift her over the wall and set her feet in a safe place. You are our hope. Rescue her we pray, in Jesus' name."

- Tom / ITeams' Refugee Ministry

“WE WELCOME REFUGEES INTO OUR COMMUNITIES, OUR HOMES, AND OUR LIVES. WE SHARE MEALS, STORIES, AND CELEBRATIONS. WE VISIT THEM. WE PRAY TOGETHER. WE KNOW THEIR NAMES.”



Ethiopian refugees with their asylum papers in Rome, Italy

ONE DIVINE INTERSECTION

When people make the desperate decision to flee from their homeland, they need to plan a route to a new life. There are some well-worn paths around the world that refugees travel; air, water and land routes that offer the simple hope of safety and a normal life. **This is the Refugee Highway...** and it is paved with tears of discouragement and fear.

The love of God compels us to do whatever it takes to reflect His heart to the world by helping the Church **meet uprooted people along the Refugee Highway**, helping them find refuge in God and join with us in offering it to others.

Our lives intersect, then, with those of refugees in Kenya, Australia, Greece, Austria, the UK, Austria, Italy, France, the Middle East, the US, and Canada.

We welcome refugees into our communities, our homes, and our lives. We share meals, stories, and celebrations. We visit them. We pray together. We know their names.

We pray for and seek after God's provision for hope, food, shelter, clothing, furniture, transportation and other basic needs.

We affirm their God-given dignity and give them a voice.

We encourage, coach and resource churches engaging in local refugee ministry.

INTERNATIONAL TEAMS

OPPORTUNITIES TO GO

TRAIKIRCHEN, AUSTRIA (THE OASIS) - Work alongside Austrian and ethnic churches in the Vienna area to reach out to refugees with the love of Christ. Help equip those who come to faith to be able to share Jesus with others - particularly people from their homelands.

INNSBRUCK, AUSTRIA - Become part of the ITeams' Refugee Ministry Team and work alongside local churches as they open and operate a new shelter ministry that will house up to 20 refugees.

For more serving opportunities, visit www.iteams.org/minopps

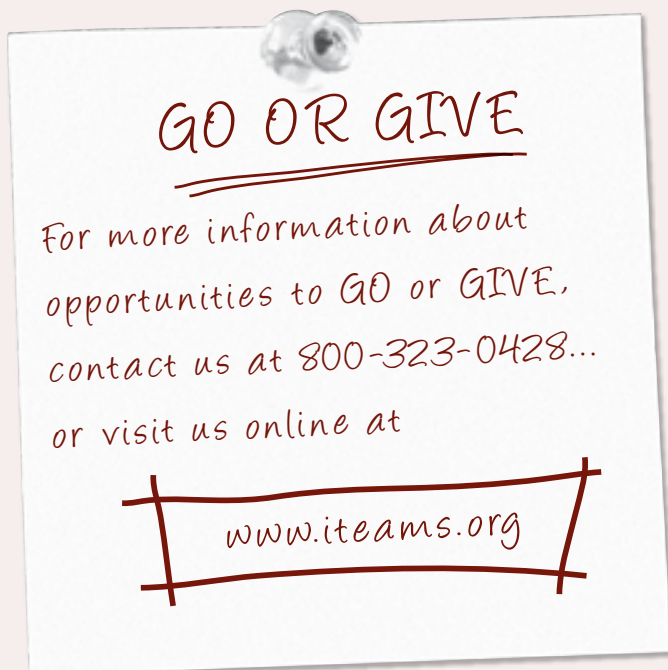
OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE

REFNET - International Teams has created RefNet, a special fund designed to receive contributions specifically intended to help empower ITeams' missionaries who were once refugees themselves.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT - \$7,500 will help cover conference costs for Refugee Ministry leaders to attend ITeams' Annual leadership training conference in May, 2006.

ITEAMS-USA GENERAL FUND - A gift to the general fund at ITeams-USA helps provide resources to create new and innovative ministries such as those to refugees around the globe.

You can now give online at www.iteams.org/give



NEXT ISSUE: ITeams USA