

Duck, Duck, Goose

One of the blessings of being a chaplain in the United States Army is the opportunity to travel to many places. I spent a year in Iraq with the 25th Infantry Division. I was stationed at Camp Endurance, just south of Mosul in northern Iraq.

The city of Mosul, where I was stationed, has a direct connection to Christianity and the Bible. The ancient city of Nineveh was located near Mosul. God told Jonah to go preach to the people in Nineveh. Jonah did not want to obey God so he got on a ship going in the opposite direction and tried to run away. God sent a terrible storm. The sailors knew God had sent the storm because of Jonah. They threw Jonah overboard and he was swallowed by a big fish. In the end Jonah did go to Nineveh, and the people listened to Jonah and told God they were sorry for the wrong things they had done.

While in Iraq I visited many small villages and met with village leaders. I also met many Iraqi children. Iraqi boys and girls are much like American boys and girls. They love to play games, ride bicycles, and they are great soccer players. I had fun teaching them how to play “Duck, Duck, Goose.” I never did learn how to say “duck” and “goose” in Arabic, but I knew when I was chosen as goose and needed to run around the circle. Since I was the only soldier playing, I was picked almost every time.

Although English is taught in some schools, only a few Iraqi children speak English. But the difference in language was not much of a problem since we all understood the meaning of a smile and a hug. It is amazing to see how God can use something as simple as a hug to show His love.

No matter what language we speak or where we live, we are all created by God’s hand. And we all hold a special place in God’s heart.

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