

# Literacy & Evangelism International

# THE MESSENGER

## REFUGEE EDITION



Winter 2016

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Issue # 1

*“I cannot read the book because I don’t know how to read.”*

ISAIAH 29:12B ERV

### FROM THE PRESIDENT: SID RICE



The Apostle Paul reminds us in Ephesians that at one time we were, “separated from Christ, alienated... strangers... having no hope...” (Ephesians 2:12 RSV). Yet now we “are no longer strangers and aliens, but... fellow citizens with the saints,” (Ephesians 2:19 NASB) because someone reached out to us with the message and love of Jesus and

introduced us to him personally. It is this realization of our past and understanding of where we come from, that compels us at LEI to reach out with the hope-filled message of Christ and the gift of literacy. We have all been aliens. We were all refugees in a foreign land before we experienced our life-transforming encounter with Christ.

This edition of the LEI Messenger highlights the work that LEI is doing in Africa, Europe, and here in the US to reach out in love to the poorest segments of our society through literacy and English Language Ministry. Refugees come to this country, and others, seeking safety for their families and hope for their future. Yet many find only more suffering and alienation. By sharing the message of Christ through the gift of reading, LEI becomes part of the hope-filled solution.

As you read the following stories, ask the Lord if He is calling you to love the alienated by sharing the gift of literacy to help alleviate the suffering of refugees here in the US and around the globe.

Your brother in Christ,

### “LOVE FOREIGNERS AS YOU LOVE YOURSELVES”

LEVITICUS 19:34 NCV

Imagine your home is Atlanta, USA. A SWAT team smashes in your front door at 2 a.m. and gives your family 60 seconds to leave or die. When you reach for your wallet and phone, they take it and break your arm. Suddenly helpless, penniless, your family of nine starts walking, barefoot, to the only destination you’re allowed to go, Mexico City. As the SWAT team passes in bullet-proof, tinted-glass Hummers, you’re cursed and branded as ‘alien’, and disallowed from any job anywhere. The only food you eat is stolen, or charity...for 17 years!

You get to Mexico City two years later. Four family members died en route. You’re still weak after being sick, in a coma for a month, with no IV feeding tubes. You’re ignorant of the local language. After three years there, you’re forced to walk to Chicago and house hop while dodging neighbors who seem friendly but enjoy killing. You trudge on to San Pedro Sula, Honduras, the murder capital of the world. During these 17 years, you’re tempted to think this is hell. Your faith in the risen Savior scorns despair, and you persevere, along with your spouse and two remaining children.

Transpose this to East Africa, and meet my Atlanta yard guy: David. After the typical 17 years of refugee transits in Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda camps, the UN and US government accepted his request to repatriate. David borrowed money and bought plane tickets to the USA for September 12, 2001.



*Story continues on page 2*

*Bob and his South Sudanese friend, Pastor David*

Story continued from page 1

Naturally, the day after 9/11, that flight didn't happen, but David's family of four arrived in the USA a month later. David started a landscaping business and became a respected pastor of East African refugees. We (Bob and Mary Mulloy) met his family in 2009 shortly after launching our Atlanta LEI ministries. David's wife, Martha, was already fluent in spoken English and asked if we could teach her to read in English. I responded: "No. We can do better. We'll teach you to read in your mother tongue, Acholi, which will take 20 hours instead of 100 in English." So, we did, thanks to Carey Jo Johnston's LEI team that produced the Acholi reading primer in Uganda years before (1995). Martha went on to reading well in English.

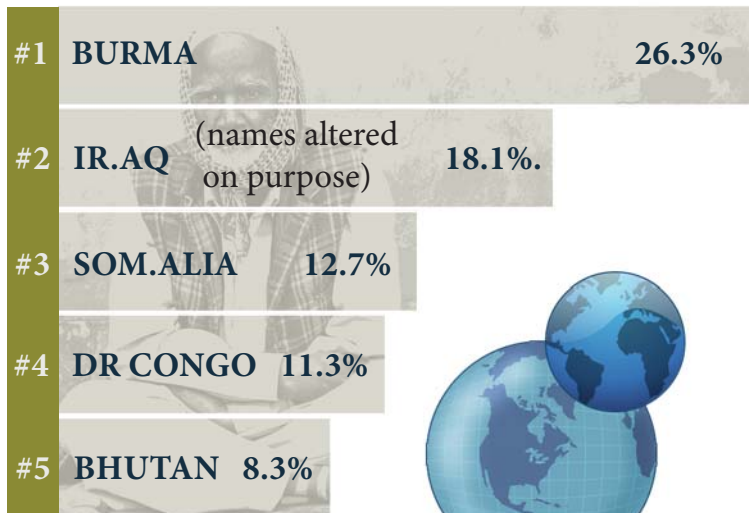
South Sudan finally gained independence in 2011, but 2.2 million people were left homeless and starving. David quickly organized a short-term mission trip and returned to visit many families living in despair. His burden was to share John 3:16 with everyone. He says, "I witnessed my dad's torture and death, and human violence that I can't discuss. But God's love is stronger. In the worst pain ever, He said, 'I forgive.'" God is so good to forgive. His people must do the same. ~by Bob Mulloy



Mary Mulloy builds friendships with East African women refugees. Mary teaches English as a Second Language and literacy to refugees and others.

## TOP 5 ORIGIN COUNTRIES OF REFUGEE ARRIVALS IN USA

2013-2015



Refugee icon created by Luis Prado from Noun Project

**ref·u·gee** a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. -Oxford American Dictionary

It comes as no surprise that "the US is the world's top resettlement country for refugees."\* In 2015, 69,933\* refugees arrived and were resettled in the United States; about the same number had arrived in each of the previous two years. Regardless of how we feel about this topic politically, the situation is a reality, and we as Christians have a great opportunity to get involved and help this international community settle in and become productive members of our society. Sharing the gifts of literacy and the English language is a simple place to begin as you will see in the following refugees' stories.

Not necessarily what politicians and news media would have us believe, in the past decade, nationals from Burma (Myanmar) have been the largest group of refugees resettled to the United States, with 148,957.

According to Migration Policy Institute, the largest number of refugee arrivals, 2013-2015, came from Burma (Asia), 18,386 persons, 26.3%. Number two was Ir.aq (Mid-East), 12,676 with 18.1%; Som.alia (Africa), number three, 8,858, at 12.7%; Democratic Republic of Congo (Africa) ranked number four, 7,876 people, 11.3%; and Bhutan (Asia) number five, 5,775 people, 8.3%.

\*<http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/refugees-and-asylees-united-states#Refugee%20Countries%20of%20Origin>



**THAHTOO** is a man of peace of the Karen tribe of Myanmar. When he was two years old, his father was murdered by the police. His mother escaped on a three-week trek, without food or water, to a Thailand refugee camp where Thahtoo spent the next 24 years.

He studied hard at the refugee school. With no opportunity for citizenship in Thailand and no freedom to return to Karen lands, Thahtoo was granted refugee status by the USA State Department and arrived in March 2008.

Thahtoo's life in America began in the violent apartment complexes of Clarkston, on Atlanta's eastern perimeter. He works day and night. Thahtoo's younger brother, Palee, arrived in America in November 2009. He joined Thahtoo in working at the Gainesville chicken processing plant and began attending weekly Bible studies with his older brother.

August is hot in Atlanta, so many refugees take short walks in the early evening, as did Palee. On August 6th about 8:30pm, Palee took about 50 steps from his driveway with two of his friends. Suddenly, a car with darkened windows pulled up. He was shot three times, the car sped away, and he died there moments later.

It happened so fast. Bob Mulloy, along with his wife Mary, visited the family the next day, grieved with them, assisted in funeral arrangements, and they prayed together. Thahtoo said, "Maybe police are doing investigation. Their brains are wiser than us. Whatever the government decide, I accept."

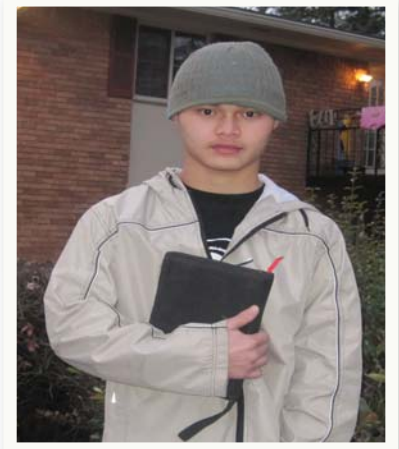
The day after the murder, a TV reporter asked Thahtoo, "Do you want to see the killers?"

Thahtoo responded, "Yes, I want to see them. But I won't hit them. We want to be friends with everyone. I love America."

Their street, Jolly Avenue, marks the border between two municipalities; neither did an investigation. Palee was buried 25 miles away. He was a refugee.

Thahtoo studies English on Sundays. He dreams of being a truck driver and already paid \$3,000 for a course. But he didn't have the skills to steer an 18-wheeler in reverse in Trucking 101, so he continues to work at a chicken processing plant 75 miles from his home.

Thahtoo and his wife Padoisy visited the Mulloys on Christmas day, bringing gifts of flowers and beautiful Karen clothing. They are devout Christians who love America and want to be contributing members of society.



*Palee, Thahtoo's younger brother, the young Karen man who was murdered*

*"Jesus loves refugees with a passion. With our 75 million refugee neighbors, the Church needs to know, be trained, and challenged to act: love in action."*

~ BOB MULLOY

#2

12,676

IR.AQ: 18.1%



Bob teaches an Iraqi man using LEI's Passport to the World of English.

8,858

SOM.ALIA: 12.7%

#3

This little boy, a refugee from Som.alia, joyfully receives a hand-sewn Christmas stocking, made by a friend from one of Bob and Mary's supporting churches. Churches and individuals donate items to fill the stockings (toothbrushes, toothpaste, socks, warm gloves, hats, crayons, small coloring books, candy canes, etc.), and gospel tracts are added in their mother languages (when available). Otherwise English tracts such as "Wise Men Still Seek Him" are shared.



#4

7,876

DR CONGO: 11.3%

**KIBABA**, at age 15, was at choir practice on a Saturday when he received the news that rebels had attacked his village and killed his parents and younger brother. He had to flee or be killed in the demonized ethnic cleansing. He left immediately for Tanzania because he heard that "It had peace there."



"I was in the bush for three days," Kibaba recalls. "I walked 60 kilometers alone. I suffered a lot. No water. I had to take some cassava from a farmer. I didn't have anything, but I gave my life to God. So I slept two nights in the bush. He took care for me."

Kibaba finally arrived at the river border but didn't have any money for passage. A family friend paid for it in memory of his father. He lived at a Tanzania camp for sixteen years, instilling hope in the younger children by teaching them soccer and Christian songs. At age 30, the UN granted Kibaba refugee status. He came to America in July 2012 with his wife Fatuma and their three children.

Bob and Mary Mulloy met this family shortly after their arrival in the US and became fast friends. Moving on from Atlanta to Iowa, Kibaba and his wife found better jobs and a good school for their mentally and physically impaired daughter.

Fatuma does on-line marketing, second shift, and Kibaba cares for mentally challenged adults on the third shift. He hopes to return to Africa to see his mom and brother (whom he recently discovered still lived) for the first time in 22 years and then spend two weeks at the same refugee camp, sharing the sovereignty of God in Bible studies. He says: "I'm not sure yet what I will say, but I let God prepare what I can say or what I can do. I trust Him."

It's humbling to have poor/rich friends like these.

# A SMALL SAMPLE OF LEI'S WORLDWIDE IMPACT

## IN DR CONGO...

a man was living with his family in a refugee quarter of a rural city in the Province of Bas-Congo. He and his family were refugees from Angola. The refugee had a beautiful thirteen-year-old daughter. One day, two young men came to his house holding a typed piece of paper, which they asked the man to sign. The refugee told them that he could neither read nor write, and because he did not know the content of the paper, he couldn't sign it. Those young men were citizens and belonged to ruling, land-owning families. One of them threatened the refugee to sign or be deported. The other, on the contrary, told the man that he was esteemed by all the citizens. The citizens had decided to give him and his family the same rights as citizens and guarantee him good, paying jobs. The refugee, who knew only how to write his name in capital letters, not as a signature, printed his name and added his fingerprint.

The refugee's beautiful daughter had been sent out to buy some salt, and, after two hours, she had not returned. When the refugee went looking for her, he heard that his daughter had been taken to a "nursery." She had been physically abused and was bleeding heavily. In fact, she had been abused by one of the two young men who made her father sign the document.

Refugees have few rights and in some places, no rights at all. The refugee went to court to bring the case to justice, but there, the abuser showed the document that the refugee had signed. It read, "I HAVE MARRIED MY DAUGHTER TO THE BEARER OF THIS DOCUMENT. THEY LOVE EACH OTHER."

The judge asked the refugee, "Whose fingerprint is this?"

The man answered, "It's mine!"

Despite all the explanations the refugee could give, he was condemned and sentenced to five years of prison. After two-and-one-half years of prison, the truth broke out. After abusing the girl, her assailant and his friend took the girl into an abandoned

house planning to kill her, but an old woman saw them and asked them what they were doing. Frightened, they created a plan to cover up their sin. They had the document signed by the girl's father. Then, they took the girl to the "nursery."

When the refugee was released from prison, he decided to join a literacy class anywhere he could find one. LEI missionary Pastor Nzongo Sila-Ndunda had started a literacy center a one-minute walk from the refugee's house. The refugee was the second learner to be received into the program. The refugee can read and write very well now. He wrote this story for his graduation test. - From Pastor Nzongo Sila-Ndunda, LEI Missionary, DR Congo



**GERMANY** took in a staggering number of over 1.1 million refugees during 2015. Missionaries in Germany who took an LEI training workshop in English Language Ministry in Nuremberg in 2014, recently resumed English classes in Regensburg (South Germany) reaching out to refugees, teaching English and sharing the Gospel, using LEI's *Using Everyday English* curriculum.

**IN THE EAST OF DR CONGO**, there are refugees not only from Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda, but also refugees who move from one province to another because of war within the DRC. The differences in shape, color of the skin, language or pronunciation, and culture are the first indicators that a person is not originally of the province, and he or she suffers discrimination. Refugees live in camps or on a separate side of a village or rural city. Children of refugee parents are highly discriminated against and are badly treated in schools, for the few parents who can afford to send their children to school.

That was the case for a primary school that received children from three villages. Refugee children were very intelligent, more intelligent than citizen or "autochthonous" (native-born) children. The latter were jealous of the refugee children and would beat them, every day, on their way home after class. Some refugee children suffered broken arms and legs from such assaults.

As the conditions of the refugee children worsened and their parents were given food instead of money for a worker's salary, their parents could no longer afford to send their children to school. Most of the children themselves were very afraid to go to school because of the bad treatment.

In 1999, LEI missionary Nzongo Sila-Ndunda visited these refugees. Using the Lingala primer, Sila started a literacy center there, teaching the first four lessons in the class, while training five refugee teachers to carry on the work. At the end of the training, the trained teachers and a woman director took charge. Later, Sila received a report that even parents who were not refugees joined the evening classes sending their children to the morning classes of that literacy center to receive instruction.

## TAKE ACTION

*Love foreigners as you love yourselves... Leviticus 19:34<sup>NCV</sup>*

Are you passionate about equipping the church to meet the great need of refugees?  
Are you heartbroken by the challenges facing non-English speakers and non-readers?  
Are you inspired by the thought of sharing Bible-content literacy materials with others?  
We invite you to visit <https://www.LiteracyEvangelism.org/get-involved/opportunities>  
to discover how you can share the message of Jesus Christ through the gift of literacy.

## PRAY

MON	Please pray for refugees such as Pastor David & Martha (South Sudan) and Kibaba & Fatuma (DR Congo), those who have come to the US, and those who are left behind in refugee camps.
TUES	Please pray for Karen refugees such as Thahtoo, his family, and others from Myanmar/Burma who have left their country for religious freedom and are working hard to succeed in the US.
WED	Please pray for those such as Bob's student friend from the Middle East, learning English, wanting to become productive citizens of our society.
THURS	Please pray for the children of refugees such as the little boy from Somalia, that they will find refuge and a new beginning in their new land.
FRI	Please pray for those in Europe and around the world who are reaching out to refugees, teaching native languages and English.
SAT	Please thank the Lord for the ability to read, the freedoms we enjoy in America, and especially, our citizenship in Heaven.
SUN	Please pray and ask the Lord if He is calling you to love the alienated, by sharing the gift of literacy to help alleviate the suffering of refugees here in the US and around the globe.

### INTERNATIONAL LITERACY TRAINING INSTITUTE 2016

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For more detailed information about Literacy Trainings and Digital Resources, please see our website:

[www.literacyevangelism.org/get-involved/training](http://www.literacyevangelism.org/get-involved/training)



Enhancing Trust

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*Literacy & Evangelism International (LEI) equips the Church to share the message of Jesus Christ through the gift of reading.*

*We develop Bible-content materials to teach basic reading in local languages and conversational English.*

*We train church leaders and missionaries to use LEI materials for evangelism, discipleship, and church planting.*