

With your generous support of **Compassion Radio** this month you're helping us make up for the **serious budget deficit** Cher mentioned. At the same time, we're *looking forward* to helping provide **FORAI** with new, expanded facilities to increase their outreach and programs for immigrant women... *So that* they can *provide for their families* in St. Louis... *So that* more of them can meet **Jesus for the first time**... *So that* the **Kingdom of God will grow** in the most international city in America – St. Louis, MO!

To accomplish that goal we'll need you to dig deep, and to do it as soon as possible. And as a **very special 'thank you'**, we've commissioned a beautiful jewelry piece from the wonderful artisans at FORAI. It's a one-of-a-kind hammered brass bracelet with a special-ly-crafted cross charm built in! It's a limited-edition piece *only*



for Compassion Radio Partners this month! It's available to you for your gift of \$25, or more, each and supplies are limited. Give it to someone you love or wear it yourself, and remember the work of **FORAI** and **Compassion Radio** as you admire the beautiful handiwork. As a special incentive to join our **Compassion Radio Vision Team** as a monthly supporter of \$25 or more, we'll send you one of these fabulous bracelets *and* a two book sampler of some of our most recent and popular book offers. For years now you've counted on **Compassion Radio** to bring some of the finest Christian books available to your attention and to your shelves. We'd like to keep doing that, and enriching your Christian walk at the same time. The titles are varied, and so will be the shipments. I know you'll be pleasantly surprised. Who doesn't love surprise gifts?

With deep gratitude for your continuing partnership and courageous faith, thank you for standing with us – now and in the years to come ...



Bram Floria



Compassion Radio

P.O. Box 2770 | Orange, CA 92859

800-868-2478

www.CompassionRadio.com | info@compassionradio.com



COMPASSION RADIO

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Finding *Compassion* in the Heartland because of YOU!



Dear Friend of Compassion Radio,

If you've ever walked the streets of a place like South Saint Louis like we did this Summer, you've probably wrestled with a range of conflicting emotions – Worry and Hope; Faith and Doubt; Pride and Despair. To be honest, I've driven through the city dozens of times in my life, but never put much thought into what it's like to *live* there. Well, after an intense couple of days walking the streets and meeting the people, I can tell you with great certainty: God is doing amazing things in America's Gateway City, and *His Kingdom is growing*.

For a number of years, I've been pondering something – "Are there places right here in the U.S. that experience the same kind of intense spiritual warfare we experience when we travel internationally? If so, where? And how do we get the story of God's triumphs in these places to our Listening Partners?" Well, when we heard about a unique and growing ministry on the south side of St. Louis, we knew we had to see it for ourselves. And I'm very glad we did. The name of the ministry is 'FORAI' which stands for "*Friends Of Refugees And Immigrants*."

It's precisely because God is bringing refugees from so many nations right to the heartland of America that moves my heart, as it should move yours! I say that with real conviction, and genuine sorrow.

Here's why: Two days after we left Saint Louis, four people - recent refugees from Africa - were beaten badly *by their own neighbors* not a quarter mile from the church that hosts FORAI's mission. One young woman is still in the hospital recovering from serious head trauma.

She was beaten with a pipe while she lay unconscious on the sidewalk. Why were these refugees attacked? Apparently because the neighbors didn't like their music and felt 'dissed.' These refugees don't speak much English, yet, and didn't understand how they had offended the family next door. Seven people joined in on the attack. Two were teenagers. *Two were only 11 years old*... This absolutely breaks my heart. I pray for healing of those attacked, and I pray for the spiritual healing of their attackers.

Thank God that His people are doing something about this! **FORAI** was started by Jennifer Owens and her missionary/contractor/husband, Jim. It all started back in 2008. The pastors of their church, **New City Fellowship**, discovered that thousands of refugees from the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Africa were being resettled in the old neighborhoods of South St. Louis. "Would anyone be



interested in hosting refugee families for Thanksgiving?" they asked.

Now this was a no-brainer for Jim and Jennifer. Having served for years as missionaries in Russia, they jumped at the chance to make a meaningful connection with new immigrants and to share the deep spiritual roots of Thanksgiving to these new friends. The event was an unqualified success for the church and launched a whole new cross-cultural outreach that continues today! An incredibly varied multi-cultural community lives today in centuries-old Dutch, German and Italian neighborhoods.

And now large groups of Burmese, Nepali, Congolese, Burundi, and dozens more people groups have joined the mix. The largest community of Bosnians outside of Bosnia now calls South St. Louis home. Old slums are being revitalized. Culinary, Shopping and Cultural Districts are booming. **Once-abandoned churches are reopened and growing...**



For all the signs of 'Success' of the Great American Experiment, there's also an undercurrent of fear, which Jennifer discovered when she

learned about the lives of immigrants. She found them living in tenements with no furniture and little clothing.



While they struggled to learn English and get jobs, most families were subsisting only on food stamps. These people were lonely, sometimes frightened, **but also determined.** Jennifer knew these new neighbors needed more than economic help. **They needed real friends. And they needed Jesus.** Jennifer set out to accomplish all three!

Jennifer discovered that young ladies and women were the most at risk, and incredibly talented at all kinds of creative and artistic skills. She asked a few if they would consider starting a non-profit to help provide them further training and marketing assistance. Together they would manufacture a line of ethically produced jewelry, accessories,



clothing and textiles. More than that, they would make new friends, form a support network for each other and make reasons to get out of their cramped apartments. **FORAI was born...**

Today, dozens of women make beautiful and unique lines of products being sold in Fair Trade stores and are ethically-produced for the benefit of refugee and immigrant families. Many of these families have now bought their own homes. They've stepped out into other outreaches to immigrant women, helping hundreds more families. Many, many of these ladies have discovered Jesus in the process and are now worshipping believers at area churches. And they're just beginning.

Just imagine – a young, Hindu Nepali gives her life to Jesus through FORAI. Now she's witnessing to her extended family and providing for them. She's training other ladies from multiple countries and languages in new profitable skills. And she's become the marketing director for FORAI. Her name is Madhavi. We sat with Madhavi, her young son Adrian and her father as she told us her story. She's just one of the miracles we met in South St. Louis. You'll meet her this month through a powerful **Compassion Radio Interview.**



Then there's So-May. Along with her mother Bo-May and daughter Say-May, (who interpreted for us,) these persecuted Karenni refugees from northern Burma recently arrived in America after years of running from Burmese military, drug runners, sex traffickers and police in three other Southeast Asian countries. After traveling 1300 miles on foot, by raft and local buses (when safe) they arrived in a Malaysian U.N. refugee camp. More years of waiting and they finally got the 'golden ticket' to America. They're just starting to build their lives and have found meaningful friendships and worship through FORAI. *You'll meet these beautiful ladies through the Compassion Radio broadcast this month.*

Finally, there's Kevin Vandenberg, Pastor at New City Fellowship South and his Director of Worship, Jules, who met the Lord in Congo and now reaches out to the large Congolese community in St. Louis. Their stories of calling and ministering to people of all nationalities are inspirational, to say the least! Their model of ministry and revival is being duplicated in several inner-city fellowships, with astounding results!



All these people, and more, are being featured on Compassion Radio this month!

Thank you, so much, for your faithful support of this ministry as we pursue passionate, powerful stories like these from Here at Home, and around the World! We'll have other amazing testimonies of survival and hope from refugee centers in Greece. And you'll hear directly from frontline missionaries and pastors throughout the Middle East and Northern Africa.

Here's a word from Cher about this:

Dear Friends:

What an astounding few weeks we have lived through lately! Disasters of every imaginable sort. It's hard to get my mind around the extent of the tragedies unfolding. It was this very kind of thing that ripped Norm's heart wide open for the suffering. In 1974 he went to Guatemala and Honduras to help following the disastrous Hurricane Fifi. That hurricane was responsible for killing thousands. Norm's burden for reaching out with aid and service - through local churches - was born in that experience. He saw how few resources other governments had for restoration compared to our country. He also saw how effective it was for the Church to reach out with aid given in the name of Jesus. He witnessed the same thing right here in the U.S. In 1976, Norm also led one of the first assistance groups into the Big Thompson Canyon in Colorado following the terrible floods that roared down the valley killing 144 people. He would be just as moved by the recent weather tragedies throughout the Caribbean and Southern U.S. But I also know he would be just as committed to help those featured in our current project. This story opened up to us in an undeniably "God way", and God knew how things would unfold this year. In light of this, Norm would strongly encourage each and every one of you to help with hurricane and fire disaster areas Along With our Refugee Project this month. Together, I know we can do BOTH. We deeply need you at this time. Giving for the Summer of 2017 has been much lower than expected, and has drained what reserves we had. We know God has put us together with you to demonstrate the compassion of Christ in bold ways. Let's do it!