

I'm in Budapest tonight staying at a friend's apartment before flying out tomorrow for the states. Christmas is here. It's bitter cold outside. The frost began forming at twelve o'clock today. The lights are up, the stores are decorated and the masses are runnin' around...my present came early.

I just finished watching the video I've written to many of you about...it is moving. There is joy and laughter, there is deep emotion and there is honesty in that emotion...there is truth in what is seen. I smiled and cried and listened intently to the comments from my friends – especially the Hungarians.

Kornel wisely brushes past the need for affirmation of a stated goal or justifiable reason for the armed presence to just the realization that God is in this place. It's not a matter of taking sides or tooting a horn...it's a realization that God sees and hears and gives to each what is needed no matter the circumstance, no matter the foundation. We don't always see Him but He is there...and you can see Him.

Marika sings a song that speaks directly to us about our own life juxtaposed with this picture of need...the ups and downs we all experience in different circumstances some more desperate than others...the contrast causing us to perhaps listen more intently. In the song she sings of shadows, places hard to see into thus outcomes unknown yet God is in those shadows, *"...in this world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*

The ministry in this video is poignant, hopeful, sensitive, it is revealing to each of us as it reveals the hearts of those ministering; being a missionary it tugs at my heart because it was a time of tangible fruit of seeing and knowing God was there, that His Spirit was with the soldiers and missionaries, ministering to the team and made known to the Afghans through His love poured out.

The hardest part about being a missionary is the time spent tending the vineyard when no flowers are blooming, no new growth and no signs of a coming growing season. Yet I rejoiced watching this video because though there was a time of now there was also a time of tomorrow. Mike speaks so well of this in the video...there are seeds being sown, maybe falling into fallow ground...waiting for the pail of water or the hoe to turn the soil; nonetheless sown into the hearts of a people or in the heart of a person a long way from home...it asks each of us where our heart is.

So many thoughts raced through my head as I watched this video...I wanted to throw a pity party because I don't see that immediate response in my ministry...I cried tears of thanksgiving for the ministry of the Holy Spirit as God touched lives...I rejoiced for the team of whom I count each one as friend...God spoke to them before my eyes...hope is not empty. I prayed that many would see this work, that they too could see and hear His voice through this step of faith.

In Marika's song that spoke of the God being in the shadows He reminded me of something He taught me years ago about shadows. In the gospel of John 1:4-5 we read, *"In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."* The light that shines creates the illusion of darkness if you will; you cannot have darkness without light and you only have darkness if you continue to look down. If you lift your head, even a bit, you begin to see a shadow; you see a shadow because now you see a contrast from the light; God shining on you.

This team, this mission trip brought a big light into a dark situation...it allowed those that were only looking down to raise their head...and feel the warmth of the light. All of you struggling in whatever mission field you are in...take heart...*"I have overcome the world."*

– kosh

