

Love Your Enemies: The Power of the Word

By Hicham Chehab

"Your Muslim brother was killed by Christians, and my Christian son was killed by Muslims, but both of us find forgiveness, solace, and hope in Jesus Christ," George Langhorst said to me. Langhorst's son Moy was killed in action while serving in the Marines in Iraq. He died, at the age of 19, in April 2004, while on patrol with his unit in Ramadi, near Fallujah.



Moy Langhorst

I met the Langhorsts at one of those "God moments," in Baxter, Minnesota, in April, during the *Becoming Northern Lights Mission Conference*, where Rev. Dr. Bernie Lutz and I were giving a workshop on Islam and how to witness to Muslims.

In the class, I mentioned how my brother, Toufic was killed by Lebanese Christian militias at the age of 22, in November, 1980, during Lebanon's civil war. Filled with anger, two of my brother's comrades and I vowed to kill all our enemies. I got a silencer and two pistols, and I started stalking my enemies in the streets at night

Meanwhile, as a student at the American University of Beirut, I had to take a course in cultural studies, for which I had to read selections from the Bible. One of the assigned readings was the Sermon on the Mount, which I read at the climax of my hate and thirst for vengeance. Christ's exhortation: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:45) struck me with full force. I thought: "There is another way, a way of forgiveness."

George Langhorst's son, Moy was killed in Ramadi, Iraq on a street the Marines had dubbed "Easy Street." During a running gun battle, Moy's patrol of 11 Marines was ambushed by 50 -150 insurgents. The attack was so intense, with gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades hurled at the Marines from every door, window and roof top, that they had to get off the street to save their lives. Moy had been with three other Marines. The three found refuge by breaking down a door and fighting off persistent attacks for about an hour; but they didn't know where Moy was. When reinforcements arrived and they were able to search for Moy, they found his bullet-ridden body around a corner.



Moy Langhorst

Judy Langhorst, Moy's mother, walked up to me after that class in Minnesota and said: "I heard a pastor preach on Romans 12:17-21 and knew that God meant those verses for me. I have to forgive the Iraqi Muslims who killed Moy."

"If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good." (Romans 12:20-21)

The essence of the Christian faith can be summed up in one word — love. God loves us. We are called to love God with all of our mind, body, and spirit; and to love our neighbors as ourselves. According to Christ's own words in the Gospel of Matthew (Chapter 22), "All of the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments."

How then can we respond to those who hate us? How can we live with the legitimate fear of those who wish to kill us? Again, Christ points to love in the Gospel of Matthew (Chapter 5). We are to love our enemies and pray for them. We get no credit for merely loving those who also love us. It is a hard calling. He goes on to say that, ultimately, God's goal for us is to "be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly father is perfect."

This teaching separates Christians from those who are trapped in the darkness of their own hatred. If they hate us and we hate them, then we are all guilty of the same thing.

George, continues the story of what happened to Moy, and how it affected them. "The insurgents had stripped him of his weapons and body armor and someone had covered him with a piece of cloth. Later, it became known to us that Moy's lifeless body had been filmed and put on the internet. This was a good thing! By seeing Moy's body, I also saw the image of the crucified Jesus making real for me the cost of our sins and the sacrifice a loving God was willing to make for me."

"Since we lost our son, our family has been blessed with many 'God moments' or, as we call them, 'Holy Goosebumps.' We 'see' them now because He has softened our hearts so that we filter life's events through His Word, helping us see things through God's eyes. My most important encounters with Jesus have been my baptism and Moy's passage from grace to glory. I compare myself to the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26)."



Dr. Bernie Lutz George Langhorst Hicham Chehab

To commemorate Moy, the Langhorsts started the Moisés Langhorst Mission and Scholarship Fund. Last year, Moy's fund donated \$2,000 to my seminary education at Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. George, Moy's father, explains, "Our primary purpose for the fund is to bring the much-needed Gospel to Iraq and the Middle East. Secondly, and of much less importance, we remember Moy by what God gave Moy--the indescribable gift of faith and promise of life eternal. All glory be to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit!"

Lord, by the power of Your Word, turn our lives into a commitment of worship in humble gratitude to you. You have sent us into the world to love and serve you, and to give to us the courage and the faith to bring peace where there is strife. Grant us, Lord Christ, the willingness to forgive even as in your great compassion You forgive us. By the power of the Holy Spirit, help us to see as you see, so that through You, we may share the Good News about Jesus. Help us to trust your Word and use it to bring others to know Your Son and receive eternal life. To God, and His powerful Word, be the glory!

Hicham Chehab is POBLO Missionary-at-Large in Chicagoland.

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To read about Hicham's ministry, go to: <http://www.ethnicministries.org> & click on "Ministry News," then "POBLO-Chicago".