

Don't Forget Compassion in the Debate About Immigrants

My friend Dawit (not his real name) is a 33-year-old immigrant from the troubled nation of Eritrea. When he was a teenager, he and his 11 siblings walked more than eight hours to the Sudanese border to escape the communist country. Eventually, in 2010, Dawit and his family arrived in the United States to seek a better life.

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After spending some time in California, Dawit moved to the Atlanta area to work as a truck driver. I met him in 2022 through a mutual friend who is also from Eritrea, and I prayed with Dawit on the phone when he decided to become a Christian. We've stayed in touch weekly, and I send him tips on how to grow as a disciple of Jesus.

This past week, Dawit called me to ask if I could baptize him. He had been studying his Bible, and he realized that he needed to solidify his commitment to Jesus and make a public declaration of his faith. So he drove his 18-wheeler to my city, an hour from Atlanta, and I baptized him in a swimming pool while several friends watched.

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Before the baptism, I read aloud the story of the conversion and baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. I highlighted verse 37, in which the Ethiopian boldly told the evangelist Philip: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37b, NASB 1995). Dawit repeated those words confidently, and then we got in the water. His smile in that holy moment was

another clear sign that Jesus has transformed his life.

This baptism on a sunny Saturday afternoon in a suburban neighborhood in Georgia was no small miracle. Dawit's story could have ended much differently, because Eritrea is a dangerous place.

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