

Oops, wrong kiss!

"Give each other a kiss of Christian love when you meet." 1 Peter 5:14 (NCV)

Isn't it wonderful to serve a God of love, who is not afraid of affection! Jesus probably hugged the disciples, especially when they were discouraged or weary. People in His culture greeted one another with a kiss.

Europeans give three alternating kisses on the cheeks of close friends and family and only one kiss to acquaintances. Since we mainly work with immigrants, we deal with many cultures and had to learn several different greetings. Our Russian friends give "bear hugs" and two kisses, the Africans give three kisses starting on the left and our Middle Eastern friends only give kisses to same gender, but three times starting on the right!

At one of the refugee centers, A. would make sure that all the other refugees came to welcome us. One day, we started to greet our friends with their appropriate kisses. By the time I got to A., I was so confused that I forgot to begin my kisses on the left and not the right. I ended up kissing him full on the mouth! His face lit up like fireworks, and he grinned. I thought, *Oh no, he thinks we are engaged!*

A. laughed and said, "My sister and mother used to kiss me all of the time. You are like my sister, and it makes me think of my family." Who knew an accidental kiss would allow us to talk about the love of Christ?

However, I try not to make that same mistake again, except with my husband!

—JODY, WESTERN EUROPE

God of love, I PRAISE YOU FOR LOVING US UNCONDITIONALLY. MAY I SHOW CHRISTIAN LOVE TOWARD OTHERS SO THAT THEY WILL KNOW YOUR LOVE. HELP ME TO BE ATTENTIVE TO VISITORS AT MY CHURCH, NEW NEIGHBORS, NEW SCHOOLMATES OR NEW WORK COLLEAGUES. LET YOUR LOVE BE EVIDENT IN THE LIVES OF MISSIONARIES IN WESTERN EUROPE. Amen.