

Breakfast, Bombs & Belief

Just before Christmas I was incredibly blessed to participate in training a wonderful group of church leaders and lay leaders who are planning an Encountering the World of Islam course. The group, from the London and Watford area, was very diverse and included Pakistani Christians (whose family history is Christian going back several generations), Muslim background believers in Christ and British Christians.

Our team was treated to a traditional Pakistani breakfast in the home of our host as we prepared for the second day of the workshop. We were glued to our host as he told of the persecution happening in his country. He said that when an American bomb falls, a church gets burned, and then described how his people are regularly targeted with crimes or physical violence because of their religion and never see justice because they are Christian in a Muslim country.

We suddenly remembered the amazing hurdles these leaders are overcoming to host a course where their congregations are encouraged to love Muslims when it would be much much easier to hate. Their friends and family live in fear in their home country. Our host and others came to Britain, a 'Christian' country in which, some thought, everyone is a Christian, only to find that no one knows or cares about what is happening. They feel like they have no voice.

Thank you for your prayers for these leaders. Pray also for our small development group as we work to support EWI in the UK which includes Kim and me as well as Bruce and Deborah who lead us. This was the second EWI Coordinator Workshop we have held. The first

one was in September '08, and we are learning how to do it better each time.



Some of the 15 participants in the EWI Coordinator Workshop doing an activity.

Crossing Cultures Workshop

Crossing Cultures (CC) is an event that helps participants cross cultural lines for the first time as well as further develop the cross-cultural relationships they already have. Along the way we learn how to listen better and to identify some of our stereo-types. Our most recent CC on Jan 31st had more than 30 in attendance. Kim (a co-worker) and I presented.

Participant comments (no kidding. We didn't make these up):

"A well of information we need to know about if we are to initiate meaningful relationships with people from other cultures." Pam

"[CC] combined a foundation of Biblical input with practical ways of growing in confidence and effectiveness when seeking to reach out to people of different cultures." Mark

...Crossing Cultures Continued

Crossing Cultures is positioned to grow. The format and content have both made great progress lately. We appreciate your prayers for workshops in February and April as well as for the word to get out about this event.



Participants brainstorm reasons people move to another country as well as the challenges they often face.

God's Goodness in 2008

Much of 2008 was about strengthening the foundations. It began with strengthening ties in the US with Pioneers (our new organization) in February and connecting with supporters and making new connections up until June. The second half of the year, after our return to the UK, we started the music school, applied for Allison's citizenship (still haven't heard anything), began a new part-time job with churches in Bradford (Challenge Bradford), and went through crisis debrief/ counselling with the team. We continue to keep busy with Crossing Cultures, Perspectives and EWI training resources.

It's been an amazing ride. We feel like God has given us a better footing. The US Dollar has gained in value to many currencies including the British Pound. This has helped us considerably.

The Big Freeze

The UK has not seen this much cold and snow in almost 20 years. The kids have been enjoying this unusual phenomenon. Madeline has had two snow days off from school so far. Adam is growing fast. He's now sleeping in his big boy bed.



Allison has been playing for worship at church and keeping up with the Children's Music Academy. Here's a quote from one of the CMA parents. "Oh one more thing, what a fantastic teacher you are, we really struggle finding things for 'Bobby'... if he thinks there's a chance he won't be able to do something he just won't try, but that's where you're different to other teachers you don't make them feel different to any other student." (Really, we don't make this up.)

Every Blessing!

Tom & Allison Madeline
Adam

Tom, Allison, Girly-girl and Bubby

Staff members are funded by tax-deductible contributions from individuals and churches.

Donations can be made to Pioneers, and designated to "King:111-110".

PIONEERS

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