



Newsletter of Jeff, Diane, Alyssa (and Daniel) ~ living and working in the Persian Gulf & Central Asia.

## A Multi-Ethnic Place ~

We continue to have a very multi-ethnic experience here in Dubai. A few weeks ago, we received an email from friends of friends in the states asking us to meet with an Afghan family here. The mother and two of the eleven children need help filling out the online paperwork to get visit visas to the US to visit two of the grown sons living there. We went and got them started, but it is an involved process, so we'll need to go again. When we arrived at their apartment, about one in the afternoon, we didn't get three feet inside the door before we were separated, Diane going with the mother and daughters into a room straight back, maybe a living room, and Jeff going with the father and sons into a side room that looked like it was used as a guest room. All seating was on the floor. The only decent English speaker was one of the daughters, in her early twenties. Diane did well communicating with the women except when that daughter had to go into the kitchen to prepare lunch for us (which we hadn't even expected to be eating with them). That daughter apparently does all the work around the home, although the others are perfectly capable. When she was in the kitchen, all Diane could do was sit and smile with them. One son sitting with Jeff could speak a little English, and Jeff could speak about the same amount of one of their languages (they have lived in five countries since they left their homeland when the Russians invaded), so between the two languages, the guys could mostly communicate. After eating, we turned our attention to the visa application. We only had a window of a couple hours to spend at their house, before we had to pick Alyssa up at school, but in their culture they would rather spend most of it giving their guests hospitality at the expense of time spent getting the help they needed, and that we had come to give. They can't not be hospitable.

Our church here has a relationship with a group of ten laborers from Bangladesh. They are here without their families, working to support them by sending money back home. They have five bunk beds and a TV in a room about the size of five bunk beds and a TV. They work seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. We celebrated Easter with them by taking them out to a Bangladesh restaurant near their apartment after they got off work for the evening – at 11pm. (They usually eat dinner at 1am.) There were eight of us from our church, from three different countries. It was great to look around and see all the conversations going on around the table between our people and these Muslim friends – about everything from how to eat the Bengali food with our hands, to the meaning of the resurrection of our Savior.

Diane met a man from the Philippines last month, when he helped her find some things at the grocery store he worked at. He had chosen to follow Jesus as a young man before coming to the UAE several years ago, but all this time in the UAE he didn't have a Bible or a church. He and Diane talked a little about church, and then Jeff met with him a few weeks later near his grocery store. He and Jeff plan to meet regularly to study the Bible.

## An Educated World Is a Safer World ~



In the above photo, the students of a rural school in a drought area are walking from the school building to the school's new playground just around the bend. Last October, with the help of a Lincoln, Nebraska church, local people turned the dirt into a playground (right). It might not look like much, but to them it is. Many families literally only have bread and tea for their meals – but, thanks to help from US churches, they have a school they wouldn't otherwise have.



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## Tension While Traveling ~

Jeff had an interesting experience several weeks ago, when he was in the very general neighborhood of an incident where an American intelligence operative killed two young local men who were probably trying to rob or kidnap the operative. You might have read or heard about the guy in the news. It has stirred up even more anti-American feeling than before, if that was possible. That night, hours after the incident, after going to bed at the small guest house in which he was staying for the night, Jeff heard a lot of angry yelling in the local language a short way down the hall in the lobby, and, muffled through the door to his room, could only pick out the word "American". Jeff shoved the large dresser in front of the door and went back to sleep, but thankfully, nothing came of it. Actually, all of Jeff's personal encounters with people there the following week were friendly, and he didn't experience any animosity directed at him.

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## Book Didn't Stop the Flood ~

In one of our areas of work, there is a small village in an arid area that is located partly in and partly next to a wadi, which is a dry river bed. This wadi hadn't had water in it for a long time. But a flash flood came down from the nearby mountains. Some people in the village didn't move up out of the wadi when the flood was coming, but instead held their Qur'ans up toward the oncoming water to keep it away from their house. It didn't work. But it gave our local partners an opportunity to talk with them about the One with real power.

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## Arab World Events ~

A couple – friends from Lincoln – visited us in April. After a great visit, they arrived back in Nebraska safe and sound, no worse for having spent time in the "dangerous" Middle East. It's totally peaceful here. Come visit!

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***News from Jeff & Diane***

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