

The T Family

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“I am sending you out like sheep surrounded by wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”

Jesus, Matthew 10:16 (NET)

“In the world you have trouble and suffering, but take courage – I have conquered the world.”

Jesus, John 16:33 (NET)



Participants and leaders at a Bible storytelling workshop I helped with

Take Courage – The verses above might suggest that we are struggling a lot. Actually, we are doing pretty well, though we have been reminded recently of the need to be “wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” Read on to see how God is bringing us through some minor “trouble and suffering”.



The kids and I at our organization’s conference. Yes, that is a dinosaur behind us!

Our leadership quickly made the decision to split up the conference, with foreigners meeting separately from the nationals, for everyone’s protection. We were all extra-careful, and nothing happened – praise God! Please pray that God will protect and guide us, and that we all will be able to walk that fine line, being both wise and innocent.

Some Trouble – In our last newsletter, we wrote about our national co-workers not getting salaries for several months. Praise God, some “gap” funds have been provided until the regular project funds are approved. Now our co-workers are training people to share Bible stories again.

One of my national co-workers was planning on contacting a Christian ministry to demonstrate Bible storytelling. However, their leader is in jail – he was one of the people arrested with the foreign Christians! Please pray for Christians here, and that God’s Word would not be hindered.

Wise as serpents, innocent as doves – A little over 2 years ago, I (S) got un-banned from E’s home country. We couldn’t live here for 10 years, because people didn’t want us sharing the Good News of Jesus.

Our visas state that we are not allowed to engage in “missionary activity”, but they don’t say what qualifies. We must be both “wise” and “innocent” – not lying, but also not revealing everything that we do. Not only could it get us banned again, but it could jeopardize our co-workers too, both foreign and national.

Recently, we had a vivid reminder of the stakes. We traveled to our organizational conference, where we would meet all of the people we usually only see online. On the day we traveled, we heard about several foreign Christians who got arrested for illegally “attending religious gatherings” and “proselytizing”. Some of their national partners were arrested too. The foreigners were deported and some of the nationals are still in jail as I write this. These arrests all happened in the state where we were planning to meet all of our foreign and national co-workers!



Casting the vision for Bible storytelling with a group of young Christians

Please don’t share this newsletter without asking us first – thanks!

Some Suffering – You may have noticed that E wasn't with us in the dinosaur picture – she joined us later, as she was recovering from a kidney stone procedure. She'd had some pain, and thankfully it was *just* kidney stones. However, one stone was causing blockage and infection had started, so a medical procedure was needed. It went well, but she felt tired and dizzy for a few days afterward. We thank God for E's full healing.



That's a thumbs-up from E, after a successful procedure!

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To contact the T Family, ask at the VCC office



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[For Financial Partnership with the T Family, please ask the leadership at VCC - thanks!]

Sending (us) out – Not only did we travel to our organizational meetings, but I was able to travel twice to train people in Bible storying. I trained a few people in English the first time. The second time I mentored the first team as *they* led the same training to others in their own language. The trainees loved hearing the Bible stories in their own language. I hope to go back next year and help all of them train even *more* people to share Bible stories!

On the train to conference



Sheep surrounded by wolves – E's home state has a Christian majority, a rare thing in this country. We don't have to worry much about being arrested for Bible storying here. It's when we leave the state that we have to be more cautious. Foreigners have to register with the police whenever we stay in hotels, travel by plane, etc. We really appreciate your continued prayers for both *physical* safety and *visa/legal* safety when traveling. Thanks!

Jesus has conquered the world! – As Christmas approaches, we are reminded that Jesus conquered by becoming a helpless baby, and by sacrificing Himself for us. May we all be as willing to humble ourselves in the service of our LORD and Master. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and Glory to God!

In (our) world – L1 turned 15 in October, and L2 will turn 8 just before Christmas. E also had a birthday in October: now she is [redacted] ;) Our kids have started learning instruments again, after a long time. J is starting drums, L2 is starting violin, and L1 is continuing piano. It was a very long, hot summer, but we are able to get out more and enjoy the mild winter season here. Please continue to pray about our language learning – especially so the kids and I can make friends more easily.

S, E, L1, J, and L2



A national co-worker telling Bible stories to some children

