

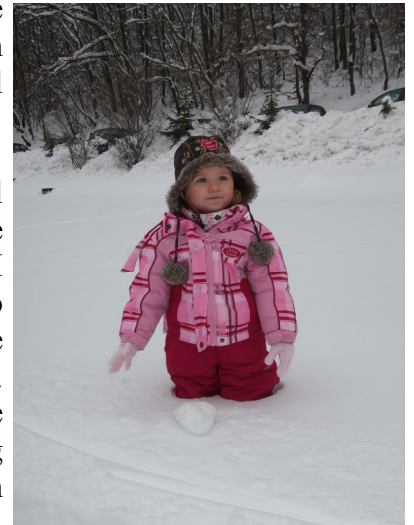
News



Dear friends,

Greetings from a white Kosova where over the past month it has been down to -23 degrees celcius and there has been over a metre of snow. The weather in January and so far in February has caused a lot of disruption and there were over 50 minor road accidents in Prishtina alone within the first 24 hours after the snow arrived. I always laugh at how a few centimetres of snow at home causes so much disruption. Here, they are much more used to snow, but the sheer volume of snow that fell here had many people slipping and sliding about, fumbling and bumping into each other and abandoning their cars in even more inappropriate locations than usual. Thankfully we have been kept safe on foot and in the car and on occasion had to use wisdom over comfort and decide to stay in or travel by bus rather than join the other athletes on the pistes!

It was originally our intention to be home in Northern Ireland for six weeks in April and May, however over the past weeks we have raised some issues with ECM that we have been concerned about for some time, we have recently discussed them with ECM and based on these discussions have agreed that it would be best for us to return to Northern Ireland sooner than our original dates. We will therefore be at home from the beginning of March and will remain in Northern Ireland until after the baby is born. During this period of time we will be discussing the issues with ECM and will be making decisions regarding our future with them. David has also committed to making the most of this opportunity off the field and will be working towards a qualification from the Open University.



In the days leading up to our departure from Kosova we have taken the time to think about our presence here so far and what God has been doing to us and with us since arriving in November 2010, we want to share some of these things with you so that you, like us, can thank God for his provision, guidance and help over the past 18 months, just as Paul encourages us to do in 1 Thessalonians 5 where he says "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."



Since arriving in Kosova we have been able to make contacts in various circles and contexts, some of these contacts have provided opportunities to share the gospel, while others have simply provided us with insights into the work that is being done in Kosova and where needs are being met and missed. We have frequently mentioned Besiana's work in the blind school on our updates, it's hard to explain just how poor the quality of care and education is for the children there and how much good Besiana has done but perhaps the words of a group of Belgian teachers who have visited and assisted the school since it opened will say it best "each year we come here and go back discouraged that nothing has changed, what you are doing here is the first thing that we are excited about" Besiana's work has also created

a link between the school, the church and the Kosova Support Group who have since helped the school in practical ways.



David's regular meetings with some atheist friends, while not changing their beliefs has produced some interesting discussions and left them with some questions and doubts in their current worldview, the interesting thing about these discussions is the strength of conviction these lads have when they are together but when they are not under pressure to 'save face' in front of each other they are much more willing to be open, one made this comment in an email he sent to David after a discussion in which he disputed everything David said in front of his likeminded friends but then apologized in the email saying "it was a fair amount of arguments that make one think twice about things." Similarly discussions with Muslim friends have raised issues with them over some of the characteristics and attributes of their god and while again there is no conversion story to write home about we hold onto the promise from scripture that God's word never returns unto Him void so we know that where seeds have been planted God is at work. David has also enjoyed the fellowship and outreach that goes on through the "goathouse" (gym) and we believe his presence there has been encouraging and positive for that ministry.

We were also involved to a certain degree in the work of Rrugat e Paqes in Peja, we attempted to start a youth club but without ongoing work with the youth in that town (which we couldn't do coming from Prishtina every day) there were no 'church youth' to work with, and we couldn't commit the time to outreach when it was so far away from our home. We also started a prayer ministry in the church which has had a positive effect on the fellowship there, between 15 and 20 believers meet together each week to bring their own requests as well as their town and nation before God.

We had the privilege of joining several different churches for worship in different occasions and got a picture of how the church is working in different areas and with different people, we were also involved in short term teams from Northern Ireland and California as well as being part of the work "Operation Christmas Child" is doing, which again was our privilege.

We feel that our presence here has also been an encouragement to some of the existing missionaries in Kosova and believe that being willing to listen and share their burdens has assisted them both personally and in ministry.

We would like to thank you for your support for us so far, both financial and in prayer, we hope that our time in Northern Ireland will provide opportunities to meet with you and share the encouragements we have had in person. In the mean time please continue to pray for us as we make arrangements for our departure from Kosova and our stay in Northern Ireland, pray for us along with ECM as we look at future options. Please also pray for Besiana and the baby, pray for health and for strength along with relief from back pain for Besiana.

In Christ,

David & Besiana.