

THE BUTLER FAMILY UPDATE



A PLEASANTLY ODD ORGANIZATION

Recently German Chancellor Merkel said “*Multikulti, the concept that we are now living side by side and are happy about it, does not work. This approach has failed, totally,*” she said, adding that “*immigrants should integrate and adopt Germany’s culture and values.*” As I read that, I felt very disturbed in my spirit. The same day, I read these thoughts from John Piper and found them challenging...

Year by year, our neighborhoods are culturally less uniform and more diverse... The local, secular “natives” espouse relativism with ease... Christians should think that God is designing a situation like the first three centuries in the Roman Empire where Christianity took root and spread so dramatically. There was no Christian consensus. There was no reigning Judeo-Christian ethic. There was no most-favored religion status. There were, in fact, no guaranteed rights for Christians nor any constitutional freedoms. There were no common categories of monotheism or sin or eternity that Christian witnesses could assume... Instead there was pervasive pluralism. There were many gods and many philosophies... In this pervasive pluralism... God has a great work for us to do. We are his witnesses. Don’t be daunted by the developments of pluralism. Ask for the wisdom and the boldness and the love that drove the early believers and gave them such amazing triumphs. Don’t bemoan the disappearance of a lightly Christianized America. Rejoice that

the Word of God has run and triumphed before (2 Thessalonians 3:1) in the very situation we find ourselves today. “‘You are my witnesses,’ declares the Lord.” And he does not send his witnesses in vain.

– from Pluralism: We Have Been Here Before. Taste & See, by John Piper

As believers, we are not called to demand our rights, nor establish a Christian consensus, nor even “bemoan” the disappearance of Christian culture. We are called to communicate to a world lost in moral and philosophical relativism that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, that he offers forgiveness and newness of life through His atoning death and resurrection.

In a pluralistic society, often the methods we employ and lengths we go to gain a hearing are unconventional and even sometimes uncomfortable. The following are three approaches that we have employed recently.

HINDU ACTORS

Recently, Svjetlana, our Bosnian Campus staff in Sarajevo hosted one of the co-stars of *Slum Dog*



Millionaire. He had connected with our Bosnian staff through Facebook and wanted to visit Sarajevo. So Svjetlana proposed that he participate in drama workshops during his visit. We

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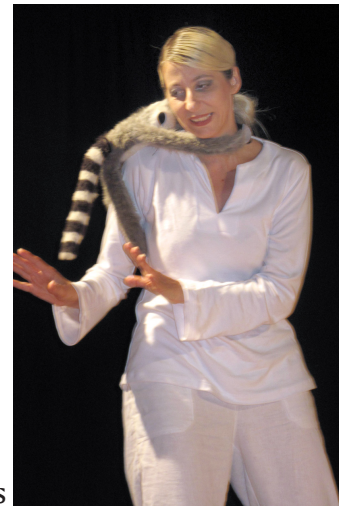
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were very open with him both about our belief in Jesus being the only way to the Father and our purpose in proclaiming this to students. Within this context, he chose to work with us. As one of my staff who visited Sarajevo stated,

When I think about Svakistudent last night I think about what a pleasantly odd organization we work for where Muslim college students would gather to hear the story of a Hindu movie star and then engage in discussion about sacrifice with evangelical Christians eager to talk about Jesus.

(Michael Brent)

Svjetlana performing in a stage production of "The Great Divorce"



ENGLISH HEROINES

In addition to the excitement of working with a famous movie star, our City Director in Sarajevo, Josh Irby, recently discovered the story of an English heroine, Miss Irby, and came to realize that he is actually an ancestor of hers. In this context, he is writing a book about his discovery (a release to coincide with the anniversary of her death) that clearly explains what it meant for Miss Irby to know Jesus.

Adeline Paulina Irby traveled to Bosnia for the first time in 1862 as a wealthy philanthropic-minded educationalist from the upper-class of England. Three years later, sent out by many of the missionary societies in London, she moved to Sarajevo to start the first school for girls in the country.

When Bosnia fell into civil war in 1875 and 250,000 refugees flooded across the border into Croatia, she stayed and worked to feed, clothe, shelter, and educate those driven from their homes. At one point she had 2,100 students - all funded by money she raised from England. By conservative estimates, she saved over 50,000 lives.



Miss Irby street in downtown Sarajevo

For her work, she is seen as a Bosnian hero - their "Noble." After the recent war, all the road names in Sarajevo were changed to Muslim names except for two: Tito's Street and Miss Irby's Street. Her life also tells the gospel story. On September 15, 1911, she died and was buried in Sarajevo. The size of her funeral was second only to Tito's. In a little over a year, many Bosnians will celebrate the 100th anniversary of her death and she will be discussed in newspapers and on TV.

BASEMENT DISCUSSIONS

Over the past few years, Karen and I saw the need for some type of fellowship that would meet the needs of the International Community and our children. In light of this, we have been working with two other couples and have begun an International Gathering, that we hope will blossom into a church.

It is rather unique as we meet on Sunday evenings on our ground floor for an hour. Afterwards, we move upstairs to share a meal and conversation. The hour we are together is centered around a theme such as "reality" or "guilt" and involves small group interaction stimulated by a video, song, poem, related to the theme. At the end of the hour, one of us gives a summary talk using the Bible as our basis.

Karen, Karen Bonnar (our good friend from California), Josh and Taylor Irby celebrate the beginning of the Miss Irby book

Thank you for participating with us in this difficult, often uncomfortable and sometimes pleasantly odd work of telling a lost and broken world about the way, the truth and the life!

