



Jeff & Diane Brown working to lengthen the list of tribes, peoples, and languages that worship God

We Just Returned from Central Asia...

We had a FANTASTIC trip. After an all-night flight from Dubai, we were met at the airport by a local man of the "Angus" people, "Zack", who is a friend of Jeff's; he took us to see a very poor, very small, neighborhood school. "Zack" is a member of a sub-tribe – a clan – that has a local NGO to work for the betterment of their people.



Kindergarten & 1st grade room

One of their projects is the school he showed us. It has two indoor classrooms and two classes outdoors, due to lack of money to build more walls on their lot. When Jeff visited the school a month before, the "bathroom"

(two 3-foot high walls in the corner of the empty courtyard of dirt, enclosing a hole in the ground) had collapsed. But by this visit, the low walls were rebuilt. However, the roof providing shade to one of the two outdoor class spaces, collapsed in this winter's unusual rains, had not been repaired. Paul Harvey has a saying: "It's not one world." Right.

We entered the dirt courtyard and trooped across to where the children were sitting in their outdoor classes. As if we reached some invisible tripwire that set them off, two grades of children rose in unison; greeted us in Arabic, then in English, all in perfect unison cadence; and sat back down. Then, when our white faces showed in the KG & 1st grade doorway, that class rose and did the same. Again, when we appeared at the doorway of the other indoor classroom, we received the same greeting.

...Salt Milk and Dirt

We stayed in a guest-house of a local hospital. Jeff was there to follow up on previous work from the month before, and we stopped there with the kids, on our way to a meeting in a major Central Asian city, so they can have a picture in their minds of the kinds of places Jeff travels to for work, as well as what the people there are like and how they live.

After leaving the school, "Zack" took us to his family's home, and fed us lunch. We had traveled all night and were exhausted, so we napped on the floor. At almost 6,000 feet above sea level, it was *freezing*. "Zack" is a lawyer, but a lawyer in a desert land of camel-herders and goat-herders is not the same as it is in, say... Ord, Nebraska. He earns about \$350 a month. He is the only person with any education among them (and the only

English-speaker). The development efforts his clan is involved in take some of this money; the school alone runs a deficit, after tuition fees, of about \$250 a month. Suffice it to say that their home is quite humble. But it is a cultural trait for them to be compulsively hospitable. They didn't serve us goat lung, like they had to Jeff the month before, but we did get to try one of their typical beverages, called "salted milk". It's some kind of milk, probably goat, with salt in it. It tastes like... uh... milk with salt in it. It's not bad, really, just different. It's a lot better than yak butter tea from Tibet or maltin from Venezuela. And look, ma, no silverware!

Their home is typical for the "Angus" people – what we would call a compound. The compound wall encompasses a room for each family to live in, a guest/sitting/entertaining room, a bathroom, and a courtyard. Really, these words should have "quotation marks" around them, because to call them "compound", or "courtyard", or even "room" give them too much credit. It's not the kind of courtyard from which Courtyard by Marriot gets its name. It's all dirt. And the rooms – all dirt. The "bathroom" consists of four dirt walls, an open doorway, a dirt floor, and sometimes a shovel. We brought our own paper. They use different parts of the bathroom (about 7 meters square space) on different weeks,

in rotation, turning the earth over if need be. There are no holes in the ground

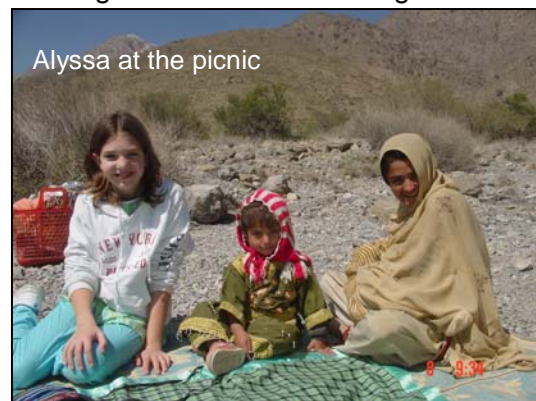


Jeff & Daniel in the courtyard

or ceiling or anything. There is only a dirt floor, four dirt walls, and an open doorway. In keeping with the customs of the area, the families are from the same clan, and speak the same language as each other. There is no running water. It's not one world.

...no George Foreman here~

The following day we went with this same "Angus" family on a fun picnic in nearby desert mountains. The kids gathered dead sticks for firewood. We cooked chicken leg-thighs on an open fire by simply running a stick found on the ground through all the



Alyssa at the picnic

thighs and hanging them over the fire. They don't need a George Foreman grill!

Both Daniel and Alyssa enjoyed our stay. Daniel looked good in the shalwar kamiz outfit. Alyssa counted 300 donkeys in 3 days! That was the highlight for her. ☺

A Split Shift for Jeff

In the last **BROWNEWS** we wrote of an "Angus" New Year's Eve "party". This time, the quotation marks are around the word "evening". Jeff hangs out with some of these same "Angus" men regularly. Recently, he went to the apartment of one of them, "The Doctor", at about

10pm, when everybody is home from work. The cousin of "The Doctor", whom Jeff met on a Central Asia trip last month, was in town. But at 10pm that night this cousin was visiting a friend of his in Dubai. So Jeff and "The Doctor" drove over to that apartment (much nicer than "The Doctor's humble flat) arriving about midnight. They all chatted, mostly in a shared Central Asian language Jeff doesn't know, for a long time. Then, at one in the morning, the host announced that dinner was served! Upon sitting down for dinner, another man, a friend of only the host, who had just gotten off a plane from Central Asia, showed up. Set another plate at the table! After a full meal (Jeff's fourth of the day), they returned to the living room for more conversation. Diane called Jeff's cell phone sometime after 2am, just to make sure Jeff hadn't wrecked the car on the way home. The host's cell phone rang about the same time - just somebody wanting to chat... in the middle of the night! But to them, it's still "evening". So Jeff works during the day; then, when the rest of the family hits the sack for the night, he begins his second shift.

As we mentioned in the last **BROWNEWS**, we have adopted the use of the nickname "Angus" for the group of tribes we work with, for security reasons. Likewise, the "Angus" people we know have been given western nicknames.

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