

Rodney and Sandy and Family - May 2008

In a city of 12-15 million it is hard to find peaceful open space for a picnic without driving a distance. But thanks to Google Earth, and Sunday morning runs we found one!. Just 5 miles from our home there is a forest surrounded by the spiralling metropolis. The warm spring weather compelled us to our first outreach picnic for the season last Sunday. Those of us with cars dropped our families off with some supplies, and doubled back to pick up others. The family of eleven kids with some aunts, uncles and cousins were bristling with excitement when we arrived to pick them up. They have very seldom left their neighborhood. We packed 19 of them into two minivans and headed back to the forest.

In order to expend some energy we took a scavenger-hunt / hike down the road seen in the picture. Along the way each group of 6 people was to find an assortment of wild life. I don't think they have done anything like this before: you could tell by the intensity in the grown men's faces as they groped around in mud puddles until they came up with a frog and then took off after their next catch. After two hours of hiking in the sun every group came back with a frog and a turtle and most of the items on the list.

After enjoying a feast we had a time of worship and Yeshim shared her testimony of how she came to be a follower of Jesus. This was the first time many of the family had heard a testimony of another Muslim born believer. In summary:

Several years ago someone gave her a New Testament. She was afraid to read it, and hid it in her home. But her 4 daughters found it and read it secretly with a flash light under their bed covers. After a few weeks of reading they told their mom that they wanted to be followers of Jesus. Yeshim was horrified at first, but with time she began to read and in time all 5 have been baptized.

Her husband is not yet a believer, and left the family for about 9 months. They have only recently been reunited, but he is still not interested in the faith of his wife and daughters. It was a wonderful and memorable day. I look forward to visiting Abdullah's family tonight: to share picnic pictures with them and to continue discussing Jesus' teachings on the mountain.

Please pray for Yeshim's husband to join his family in faith in Christ. Also pray that there would be some adult to escort at least 6 kids to camp this summer. Yeshim would like to, but her husband is not giving her permission yet.

Wednesday 23 May was a public holiday here. Traditionally thousands of Turks make a pilgrimage on this day to a Greek orthodox church on the top of an islands near our town. The pilgrims believe that if they make the long walk up the hill, and tie their requests to trees around the church, and burn candles in the church that they will get their requests. It seems a bit odd that Muslims would consider a Christian Church as a place to do homage, but there are a many folk Islam practices like this.

About 20 of us set up a station near the base of the road leading up to the church, and from there we distributed new testaments, (incil), and had a prayer ministry area. I prayed with probably 15 women, and one man, in the first 30 minutes. I asked a Turkish gal from our house church to take my place in the prayer ministry and I filled box after box with new testaments and walked up to the church calling out like a street vender: "Would anyone like an Incil?", " They are being giving away as gifts today", " don't miss this opportunity", " It's helpful to read - why not try it", etc. We handed out 10,000 in about 6 hours! It was a great day - a very unique opportunity in that it was appropriate to hand out bibles to "pilgrims" on the road leading to a church. Pray that many of those who took the NT's would read them and that the Spirit would impress the Truth on their hearts.

While it's fresh on my mind, please also pray for Erkan, a young man we met with for the first time last night. He seems genuinely interested - but he works 7days a week, until 10 pm, so we have limited time in which to meet him.

We will be on furlough this summer, and look forward to seeing many of you. Our itinerary is as follows:

July 1st -18th Illinois
July 19th - August 9th: California (Davis & Bay area)
August 9th -25th Colorado
August 26th - Sep 5th Illinois

Thanks again for your partnership
Rodney for Sandy and the family