

Dear Chuck,

We have finally got everything reconnected here in Alicante. We had to start over with everything: electricity, phone, internet, gas, etc. because we were gone so long. The good news is that I am now officially retired from the Church Pension Fund and can do whatever I want now. It still isn't quite enough to live on here but Ninfa is now the official SAMS missionary for tax purposes and we don't have to raise near as much support now.

The really exciting news is that we are developing a very good friendship with a Muslim couple from Algeria who are our age. He is teaching me French and Arabic. He was a French teacher in Algeria and received a letter warning him to quit teaching French or be killed by the radical jihadists so he had to flee to Spain nine years ago. He was working in construction but that has collapsed here due to the economy. I am paying him a little to teach me twice a week. His wife has many health problems and they have five children in ALgeria. We have had many interesting theological discussions. He is a devout Muslim but very peaceful and friendly with Christians. I took him to the Salvation Army to receive food. We work a lot with the Salvation Army here.

I explained to him that when CHristians say that they are sons and daughters of God they don't mean it in a literal, physical sense but in a spiritual sense. Muslims think that we believe that God had sex with a woman if we say that. I also had the opportunity to explain to him that we believe that Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the whole world and that is why we believe that He really died on the cross and was not taken away to heaven by Allah before He died and replaced by a phantom. He believes that Jesus is in an inferior level of heaven than Mohammed who is in the highest level but that Jesus is coming back. Actually Mohammed knew heterodox Christians in Damascus and that is where he got his understanding of Christianity. My friend believes that we all have two angels one on each side of us, one writing down our good deeds and the other writing down our bad deeds. On judgment day they will each be weighed and if our good deeds outweigh our bad deeds we will go to heaven. So there is no concept of grace at least when it comes to salvation. I wonder what he would think of Jesus saying that we must be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. Of course he would never ever call God father.

Please pray for our friendship with this couple. They came over and his wife made cous-cous for us. She is really sweet but doesn't speak Spanish. He does believe that a man should only have one wife and he thinks that divorce is horrible, that in itself is very unusual for a Muslim. He is a very quiet, gentle man. I value his friendship. He is always offering to help us and Ninfa in any way he can. I won't give you their names because of the danger that all Muslims face in befriending Christians anywhere.

Please let your church know that we are back safe and sound and back in the battle thanks to them and their generosity. We pray for you and Ellen and all your kids and their kids. We still don't have any grandkids yet. You are blessed.

God bless,

John