



The Goldilocks Paradigm

by Bud T.

Having the opportunity to work in a country located on the Arabian peninsula, Bud T. reflected on his interactions with the local people and how they perceived his “American-ness” and “Asian-ness”, or lack thereof, with welcoming arms.

Goldilocks ✧ Goldilocks tried the porridge: the first bowl was too hot, the second was too cold, but the last bowl was “just right”. “Just right” — that’s exactly how I felt as an Asian American living in the Arabian peninsula.

Not quite American but Asian American ✧ These two words define us in a way that the world does not understand. The world is still ignorant that millions of Asian Americans have been living in America for generations. They see us not as bicultural Americans, but as Asians merely living in America. In the eyes of my Arab friends I had the passport, the clothing, and the lifestyle of an American, but I was still Chinese to the core.

They viewed the infidel, villainous war-monger as a white male from America, not as a Chinese male whose parents immigrated to America for a better life. To them, I was not quite American.

Yet not quite Asian ✧ On the other hand, I was also not quite Asian. Arabs never commingle and become friends with the Asian-born because Asians are seen as lowly dirty people, who eat every part of a pig, dogs, cats and anything else that moves. But for some reason, I had more Arabs befriending me than I had time for. The difference was because I was born and raised in America, so I was not one of *those* Asians. I was from America, spoke English, was Westernized, and had a respectable job. So from their angle, I was not quite Asian either.

The best of both worlds ✧ Although not quite fully Asian nor fully American, I was enough of each to be everything Arabs wanted in a foreign friend. I was born and raised in America, so I was a valuable language partner. I knew about America, its ways, its people, its culture. And although much of the world despises America, there is still a healthy admiration and envy of Americans and a desire to have the almighty green card.

But I was also Asian enough that they were able to connect with me. I was also part of the non-Western world, sharing a similar culture with Arabs. We take shoes off at homes, care for aging parents, move out when married, avoid conflicts, value our reputations, also known as “face”, and don’t go Dutch when eating out. My Arab friends knew white Americans were not so. When they saw these qualities in me, I was like one of them. I had the best of both worlds.



A Muslim reading his Koran.



Two Arabian friends.

Just right ✧ Being Asian American makes a huge difference in the Muslim world, making life safer, minimizing the stigma of being American and also opening, otherwise closed, doors for relationships. We are able to benefit from our mixed, third culture identity because the world still views the core identity of an individual not so much based on where one lives or their citizenship but their ethnic ancestral background. And when it comes to our background, we are not too American, not too Asian, but “just right”.



How Much Greater is God’s Love for a Wretch Like Me

By Crystal C.

Looking back at her recent overseas experience, Crystal C. describes her experience as blessed and painful at the same time. In doing so, she is reminded of the core reality of Jesus’ love for us all.

Blessed arrival ♥ Ten years after making the commitment to go into the mission field, I finally became a tentmaker to China in 2005. As a trained medical worker, I was blessed with a job working among the locals in a top medical school. I had direct contacts with future Chinese leaders: it could not have been more perfect.

Because of my position, I was able to reach Chinese doctors. I felt privileged because few people had such an opportunity for interaction, and I wanted to be a faithful steward of what God had entrusted to me.

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Thus, I went all out, and about a year later, I encountered what many missionaries often talked about — spiritual warfare. Because I was on the “frontline”, spiritual warfare was *much more obvious* in China than in the Western world.

Sobering realities ♥ The reality of missionary life is often not accurately portrayed in most of the newsletters that we receive from missionaries. Thus, the descriptions tend to cause many of us to romanticize missions.

The mission field is much more difficult than what we imagine. Unless there is an army of prayer warriors behind missionaries in the field, we will not be fruitful. Of course, this strategy also requires transparency from missionaries so that prayer is powerfully targeted.

Expect affliction ♥ God doesn't promise a life free of afflictions even when we obey him and go into the mission field. “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived,” states II Tim 3:12-13.

This doesn't sound encouraging, does it? Well, then let me share with you another Bible verse, this one from I Peter 5:10: “After you have suffered for a little while, the *God of all grace*, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, *will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.*”

During some depressing days in China, I said to myself upon awakening in the morning: “*What are you doing here? These*

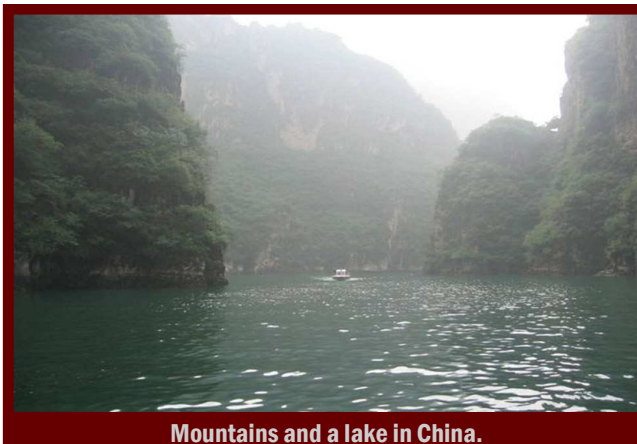
people don't appreciate what you gave up for them and the Good News that you want to share with them.”

Looking to the cross ♥ During those times, I would be reminded that Jesus did not have to come to save us — yet out of His love — He *chose* to. Jesus was betrayed often, but He forgave His enemies, through the power of the cross. I cannot imagine how painful it was for Jesus — a sinless man — to die in our place.

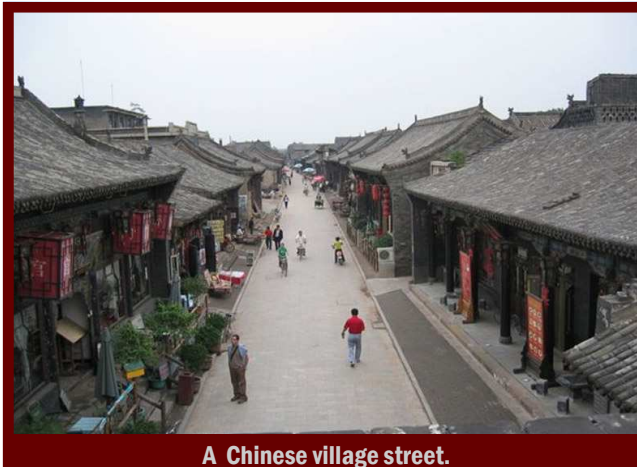
Forgiving my local friends who had hurt me with words and lies made loving these “unlovable” people very difficult for me to do in my fleshly nature. However, with “spiritual eyes”, I recalled *how much greater is God's love for a wretch like me*, and that spiritual truth transformed me to have the capacity to forgive and to love.

Deepened and changed ♥ From my 2-year tentmaking experience, I returned a different person with a deeper understanding of God's grace that I otherwise would not have learned if I did not go to China. For me, this transformed life is what being a World Christian is all about.

Now that I am back in the States, I continue the World Christian journey by supporting my missionary friends out in the field financially, emotionally and spiritually with prayers. Through emails and phone calls, I encourage my Chinese friends to seek the truth. At work, I desire to live out the truth but yet manage my staff with grace and compassion. In my Bible study time, I continue to learn about God's heart for the world and wait for his direction on the next step. 🇨🇳



Mountains and a lake in China.



A Chinese village street.

REGIONAL WORLD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP PRAYER GROUPS!

The following prayer groups meet monthly. For more information on meeting times and locations, visit wcfellowship.org.

•East Bay (Moraga, CA)
•Seattle (Tukwila, WA)

•LA (Arcadia, CA)
•Bay Area South Bay (Sunnyvale, CA)

•SF Monthly Missions Meeting (MMM) (San Francisco, CA)

“Prayer does not fit us for the greater work, prayer *is* the greater work.” — Oswald Chambers