

Steeves' Summary #6: Culture Shock in Toronto



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No, it wasn't the fact that there is a huge, diverse ethnic population in Toronto. No, it wasn't the fact that we were living in a college dorm for three weeks. We were suffering from culture shock due to those 16 lanes of traffic, all going at insane speeds!

We were in Toronto for three weeks of mission orientation. What in the world were we going to learn about that would take so long? How would we deal with the living situation? Could we handle Toronto weather? There were lots of questions before we left, but we were glad to go. I had just finished a stressful project at Point Lepreau and was glad to have a nice long break.

Whatever hesitations I had were blown away on the first session on Sunday evening. "Mission exists because worship doesn't" we were told. I was a little puzzled as some discussion started, then it started to make sense. As catechisms through the ages have stated: the purpose of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. If people around the world were worshiping God, there would be no need for mission. It was a foundation for the rest of the week. We exist to worship, and we started each session with a time of worship, preparing our hearts and minds for learning and understanding.

There were 36 missionaries in the two week MissionPrep course. They were from BC to Newfoundland, as well as the US and Germany. They came from many church backgrounds, they were going to many different countries, serving with AIM, CBM, GEM, SIM, Interserve, Salvation Army and others, yet there was a sense of real unity in the Lord. Almost all of us had significant overseas experience. I wasn't alone! We had chances to share, to mix, to encourage, and to worship together.

Of course we had some fun as we learned as well. On our second day together, we went to "Little India." We were to observe, touch, feel, taste, smell, and try to understand a little of what we were seeing. Each small group was to buy one small item and learn of its significance. We bought a stone elephant, its trunk raised for good luck. We ended the afternoon with a meal at a small restaurant. Thirty-six missionaries, twelve kids, and three facilitators filled the place. They closed it down for "Robert's party", and we had a taste of India. Mmmmm! I wanted to back a few days later, but the rest of the family wasn't so keen.

I can't even begin to cover the two weeks of MissionPrep and the week of AIM orientation. There was everything from how to learn a language, how to deal with culture shock, how to get along with other missionaries, how to be sensitive to your host culture. Even though we were going many places, it was applicable to all of us.

The third week was specific to those of us going with AIM. There were 14 of us, and all but three were from Alberta! The group wasn't quite as diverse and stimulating, but the information presented was important to help us prepare.

I've written too much already, but I could keep on going. I haven't even mentioned all the great people we met, the opportunities to meet staff from AIM and CBM, or our escapades through the city. We came away blessed and feeling better prepared spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually to go to Kenya.

We are now planning on leaving in December

We have had to delay our departure until December 6th in order to raise the remainder of our support. We now have 100% of funds required to get us to Kenya, but we have 40% of the monthly support pledged to maintain us while we are there. We have received an email from the Superintendent of RVA asking if there is any way we can get there earlier, and if there is anything he can do to help us. I have to believe that we are going in God's timing, and that he still has work for us to do on this end.

Atlantic Baptist Women's Convention August 9-11

We will be at the ABW Convention this year in Sackville. On Tuesday, August 10th, Bernadine will be taking part in a program titled: "For the Love of Africa". We will also be sharing our story that evening and will have a display table set up. We are looking forward to meeting some of you we have only heard from over email and telephone. We hope to see you there!

Sharing about the Kenya Mission this Fall

We are available this Fall to share with churches or groups about Kenya and our upcoming mission. If you are interested in having us share, please contact us.

In Christ,

Michael and Bernadine