



THE MISSION

Everyman's Ministry in the United Arab Emirates

Ben and Claudia Ridley

📍 2759 Logan rd, Eight Mile Plains, QLD 4113

0421 913 259

benjamin.ridley@hotmail.com

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0450 139 554

claudia.ridley@hotmail.com

www.everymans.org.au

Special greetings from The Middle East where the weather is hot! This news update is coming to you approximately three quarters of the way through my deployment to the U.A.E and it has been a fantastic experience so far both professionally and spiritually. I have been able to see a side of the military that I have not previously in my time with the infantry, a much slower pace and a lot safer for that matter too! It has been a time of solidarity in many ways being away from Claudia and all the brothers and sister back home but overall it has been an extremely rewarding time!

CHANGING OF THE GUARD



After a few dramas with getting my passport only moments before I left for the Airport and being held up in Darwin over night I finally arrived in country. I received a handover from Sallyman Lyndley Fabre (pictured) and settled into the new role as the Philanthropic Rep for Camp Baird. Being an inter-service base meant that many of the Navy and Air Force who may not have experienced Everyman's before began to see what we are all about. I had to quickly set about trying to learn the hundreds of people based here and for me it has been a challenge but

through many conversations and visits around the base I have come to know many of the men and women stationed here. The Lord quickly gave me opportunities to share the gospel and make some new friends. I also met a few Christians some of which work on the base as civilian contractors and it has been a blessing to be able to find true fellowship in a mainly secular working environment. There is nothing like being refreshed and refreshing a fellow believer in the Lord through the commonality of the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ! Oh, did I mention the hot weather? It has been consistently above 40 degrees and it is now pushing 50 degrees as we enter into the beginning of summer!



UNITED NATIONS

One of the great things about this trip has been meeting and getting to know some of our coalition partners in the American Army. I have gotten to know the American chaplain Adam and his assistant Anthony. I have been attending their services on Sunday mornings and some of the Americans have attended our services in the afternoons which are usually run by the Australian chaplain Mark. During my time here I have been blessed to be able to share the word on a few occasions at both American and Aussie chapels and I am very grateful the Lord for such opportunities. The photo on the right is out the front of the American chapel with some of the regular church goers.



As I mentioned in my introduction I have also met some Christian Filipino brothers in the Lord who work on the base here and one of them Rey is a pastor at a local church in Dubai. I was surprised to hear that Dubai is a pretty liberal city compared to most in the Middle East and they are free to have a church and they are even allowed to witness on the streets to a certain extent. Their church also visits the communities that have foreign workers who come to work here, many who are away from their families for 11 months of the year!

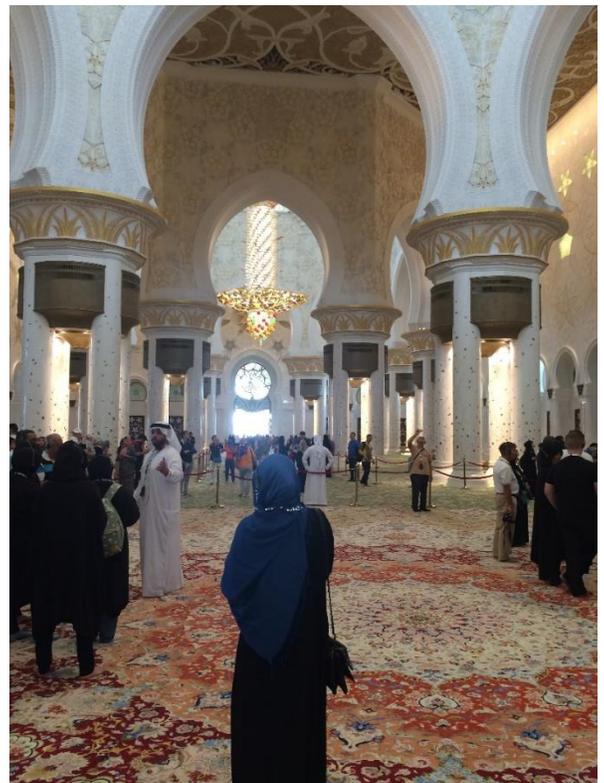
Rey and his church go and visit them and bring a meal to share and conduct Bible studies with them. He invited me to come to their church and I went and shared my testimony of God's power in setting me free from my old life of sin. The photo on the left is from Rey's church, these are the people who are the regular workers in the church. The three guys down the bottom from the left is Rey, Marlon and Ryan. Rey and Marlon work at the coffee shop and Ryan works in the gift shop. The boys were able to take the day off to come to church. Please pray for all the people who have been reached with the gospel message and have received it openly. I hope to be able to keep in touch with them in future and encourage them in the faith.

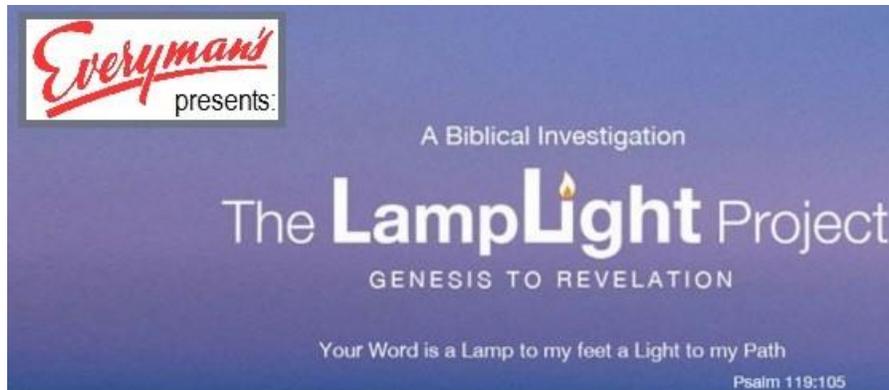




A Cultural Experience

One of the responsibilities that I have here is to lead the cultural tours of the local country. We currently have cultural tours of the Mosque's in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Both tours have different experiences and both have pro's and con's. The tour to the Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi is an amazing experience. Even though I do not believe in the religion of Islam the mosque is an amazing structure and would have cost a fortune! In fact, they would not actually say how much it cost to build. The tour begins with us travelling a few hours in the bus in which I give some history and facts about the U.A.E. and Abu Dhabi. Once we reach the mosque the first thing that you notice is its vast size, it reminded me of the passage where the disciples pointed out the amazing structure of the temple in Jerusalem but Jesus was not impressed and informed them that one day that great structure would be completely destroyed (Matthew 24). I was reminded that in the long run everything on this planet will pass away even the most powerful and costly structures that man can build. Once inside we take a free guided tour in which the tour guide provides many facts about the mosque and the culture of the country. After the tour is complete we take the bus to a place called the heritage village and have a buffet lunch followed by a time of wandering around the village looking at the various different old style merchants and traders. There are carpenters, metal workers, glass makers. We then jump back on the bus and return to base. The tours to the Dubai mosque are similar, although the mosque is in no way comparable to the Abu Dhabi mosque in terms of grandeur. The guides give the public a brief about their version of Islam which is very much a western influenced version and they give demonstrations on how they clean themselves before entering the mosque to pray. Following that we leave and go to have lunch at a nice restaurant in town with local Emirati food. After lunch we go to an underground museum and then following that take a walk through the souks where you can buy various traditional clothing, souvenirs and spices. We then take a ferry ride over the river and end up in the gold souks. Many people buy jewellery as it is relatively cheap. After this we return to base. Some of the good things about running the cultural tours is that we are able to be in an environment where religion is openly being discussed in a way that is not uncomfortable for the people on the tour, this can lead to us being able to share our beliefs and even compare Islam and Christianity and most importantly who Jesus really is.





One of the many highlights on the trip so far has been the running of a Bible study course for anyone ranging from sceptics to people who have walked with the Lord for a while. The course was a video series that covers from Genesis to Revelation called 'The Lamp Light Project'. We ran it twice a week on a Monday and Wednesday night over about 6 weeks. The course was well received and we had a total of about 15 people who came with an average of about 8 who came regularly. We had a good combination of people who were not believers but wanted to find out more and a few who had not been walking with the Lord. I think that everyone who came got a lot out of the course, I know I did too. After each session I opened up the floor to a 'Question and Answer' time. This was almost as good as the time watching the video, it gave the opportunity for everyone to share their thoughts, ask some difficult questions and clarify anything that they had seen but perhaps did not understand properly. I thank the Lord that there were those who came to learn and explore the Christian faith, I know that there were a few changed lives and couple of people who made the decision to repent and follow Jesus! Praise the Lord!



ON THE FAMILY FRONT

Claudia has been working hard at her job at the Bethany Aged Care facility whilst I have been away. She began working in the Catering area and cleaning area however the company announced that all of the cleaning and catering jobs were going to be sub-contracted to another company, this meant that her job was not guaranteed to be held but we knew that God has all things under His control and soon enough Claudia was offered to become an actual carer as an employee of Bethany. This was fantastic news and she has begun her new role as a carer and she has commenced studying for her certificate online. She has been enjoying her time there and has been sharing with me all the wonderful conversations she has had with the dear people in the facility. I feel that the Lord has put her in this role to be a real encouragement to them and to share the love of God with them. I see that the Lord has blessed Claudia with a ministry of refreshment to everyone who meets her with her gentle and loving nature.



Claudia has had much free time whilst I have been away and this has meant that she has been able to catch up with many friends and we are grateful to the Lord that she has such a strong network of faithful brothers and sisters supporting her. She also had a visit from my mum Alison (pictured below) who flew up from Adelaide and stayed about a week with her. It was a great time for them to bond and do a bit of site seeing.

Next year Claudia and I are planning to return to Brazil for a holiday and so I have been studying my Portuguese whilst here. I enrolled in an online course and it has been well worth it. The course is very enjoyable and it will set me up to be able to have basic conversations when I get there, unlike the last time when I had only a tiny bit of ability to communicate. I can

understand what Claudia went through when she came to Australia! We regularly set aside time to only speak in Portuguese on Skype. I have also met a Brazilian woman over here so it has been good to practise having conversations with her.



After 3 months of being here I can say that this has been one of the best experiences of my life, so different to all of my past deployments and certainly much more meaningful in light of eternity. I thank the Lord constantly for this opportunity and for the growth in all areas that I have felt here. I know that being here has been a time relying on His strength and this is the strength that can get us through anything because my Father is the infinite source of strength. He has proved Himself faithful to Claudia and I sustaining us while we have been apart from each other. I look forward to returning to Australia and facing the many challenges that will inevitably lie ahead. There are also many exciting things to come for the rest of the year. My childhood friend: Todd has asked me to be his best man in his wedding in October. Todd had a very unique way of asking me, he had a bottle of red wine with a label made up to read 'Ben be my best man, stand by my side when I marry my bride'. Claudia received the bottle in the mail. The picture below is how I responded to him after Claudia showed me the bottle over Skype. Claudia and I will travel down to Melbourne and make a bit of a holiday of it. We have several people to visit on the way down there and we have already started making arrangements for the trip to come.

One final thing, we would love to express our love and gratitude for your support toward us. We would like to please say not to feel obligated to give financially especially if you are not able to do so because of hardships. Although we certainly appreciate all that has been given to us we trust in the provision of the Lord's hand and He has been faithful to meet us every step of the way thus far.

And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. - Philippians 4:19



Much love,

Ben and Claudia



EVERYMAN'S WELFARE SERVICE
Serving the Australian Defence Force