

# Showing practical care opens spiritual doors

MECO works with churches and aid organisations to offer practical help. Here **Brenda\*** and **Colin\*** describe their recent personal experiences, and illustrate how important prayer partners are to their work.

Imagine working in a country where people have never heard the name of Jesus and the authorities want it to stay that way. Your home will be searched, your actions analysed, your friends and colleagues killed, and the people you work with will tell you that they fear for your safety.

Brenda and Colin Young\* work with a development charity in a culture hostile to Christianity. Their stories illustrate how the support and prayers of brothers and sisters in Christ are enabling them to show the love of Jesus in practical ways. How encouraging for them to know they are not alone as they seek to improve the quality of life for those around them!

"Part of our work here includes what we call Capacity Building, or teaching the local people how to develop their communities and improve their standard of living," explains Brenda. "Colin has many skills that are needed here, so he serves by providing the necessities of life to people less fortunate and 'give a cup of water in Jesus' name.'" Mark 9:41

"Until recently people have been living off food provided by relief agencies. Their diet was limited to just the basic necessities. We want to improve their overall health and well-being, so we offer

training in health, sanitation, personal hygiene, first aid, home nursing, food processing and cooking skills."

## When doors open ...

Living in this way means Brenda and Colin are witnesses 24/7. "We have to be very intentional in all we do because people are watching us," says Brenda. "They know we're Christians and we have to be careful what we say. But when a meeting is officially opened, a sura from the Qu'ran is usually recited. And then we are often asked to pray or read from our Holy Book too. It's an amazing door that the Lord opens for us."

Other doors have opened too. Meeting with other 'internationals' leads to conversations and loans of books and Bibles. Connections with teachers, and through them students, mean many people have learned about Jesus through the popular video-film. But life in this part of the world is unpredictable. Last year a colleague with the Youngs' aid organisation was murdered, prompting discussions over whether the team should pull out.

*"We need you here. What will we do without you?"*



Your support helps improve the quality of life for many

## Trusting in the faithful God

But even in the uncertainty, Brenda knows they are acting in God's plan. "We could only survive this because God has raised up partners, faithful people to pray and support us through letters of encouragement, financial support, and consistent prayers on our behalf. We are so thankful for the faithful family of God. We're a long way from home, in a strange and difficult place. It's such a blessing to know that we're not forgotten." "Just today one of our staff was talking about the risks westerners face. He said, 'We need you here. What will we do without you? No one will care, or come and help us like you're doing and then we'll just die'. It was a good reminder to us why we are still here. So, until the Lord tells us it's time to leave, we'll stay." m

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