



*to see Mongolians
building and restoring
families, churches,
and communities*

Man Shall Not Live On Meat Alone

by Jolanda Van Vliet

*“... to
share and
reach out
in a
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God has surprised me in leading me to going to Mongolia. The process went fast and before I arrived, I still knew so little about Mongolia. For the last five months I have been taking language classes at Friends School. The teachers have been great. They are friendly, patient and able to encourage me in the moments where I feel that I forgot everything that I have learned. And unfortunately, I have lots of those moments. Though learning a new language is not easy, speaking the language does help me in connecting with local people and gives me insights into their culture.

The first thing I noticed about the culture is the importance of animals. I remember how in the beginning after learning the alphabet and numbers, animals' names came along. Camel, sheep, goat, cow, horse, which are often referred as the 'five animals' of Mongolia. Continued with practicing questions like, 'How much does a horse cost?'. Which is not a question I usually ask people. And soon I discovered meat is dominating in an average Mongolian diet. And when I look back on my time here, I think I have eaten twice as much meat than I would eat in my home country.

Besides the language classes I have been trying to find new ways of practicing the language outside of class. God has answered my prayer and blessed me with a Mongolian housemate, who hardly speaks any English. Having her in my home gives me many practice opportunities. Though I still need to guess most of what she says and often we end up getting lost in translation. Fortunately, we can still laugh about it.

The first time we met, she had only one question, which was if there was space in the freezer for her meat. I thought it was a funny question, but culturally it all makes sense.

In the coming months I will continue with language classes and hope to improve my understanding of the Mongolian culture. My desire is that one day I would be able to share and reach out in a relevant way and in their heart language. And then we most likely need to change the verse in Matthew from 'Man shall not live on **bread** alone, but on every word that comes from...', to 'Man shall not live on **meat** alone, but on every word that comes from...'.
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Child Safety And Protection

by Elisabeth Mensert

“We believe that every child is valuable and wish for them to have a flourishing future.”

The Government of Mongolia has put children, their safety, and protection as one of their most important priorities for this year. At JCS, we have a long history of working with vulnerable children, and as such their safety and well-being is close to our hearts too. A few years ago, therefore, we became a member of the Child Safety and Protection Network with the aim to keep learning about all aspects that it entails so that our children stay safe, but even more so, the children that we work with in our activities.

In order to implement effective child safety strategies, one needs to do more than writing a policy or procedures. The network identifies seven elements of an effective child safety programme. These are: governance, definitions, screening, training, childcare protocols, response process, and member care.

Unfortunately, child safety and protection is a growing worldwide concern. Harm done to children can be physical or sexual, but also emotional, spiritual, or educational. Very often it is intentional but not always. Neglect is a form of harm we see a lot in Mongolia when children are left alone leading to all kinds of harm. Unfortunately, alcoholism often leads to physical abuse of women and children. As such, there are many opportunities to teach about child safety and protection in Mongolia.

With our children growing up in a tech-age, spending so much time online, we need to teach them how to do this safely too. Awareness is one of the key areas to prevent harm, and both adults and children need to be taught what apps and practices are safe and which are not. For example, we need to discuss whether it is safe for children to take their phones into their bedrooms.

We at JCS are fully committed to keeping our children safe. We believe that every child is valuable and wish for them to have a flourishing future.



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