



## First Impressions Of Afghanistan *May/June/July 2005*

- It has been very easy to build relationships with the local nationals and our family has been received well in our neighborhood. Surface relationships are easy to build but earning the trust of the heads of homes takes much more time and lot's of tea.

- Security issues have been a challenging reality and changed almost every aspect of how we live our lives. I am sure we will become more comfortable over time but to quote an army commander I was talking with "Afghanistan is still a war zone". Our family takes shelter in the Lord our strong tower and the promises of protection we find by being in the center of his will for our family.

- The natural beauty of this country is paralleled only by the destruction you see everywhere. We wish we could freely go for a hike with our family but Afghanistan is the most heavily mined country in the world.

- Talking about the topic of faith and things spiritual is very easy here. Their mindset is that everything is sacred compared to the typical western mindset of sacred and secular being separate. We are automatically assumed to be Christians because we are westerners and we are watched closely how we live our lives.

- This is a shame / honor bound society. The family is also the core of the social structure in this country. The individual does not have the place of decision as in a western society but conforms to the will of the family for the betterment of the family or tribe. There is so much more to share such as the oppression of women, child abuse, the thriving growth of the

church but that is for another month. -

### Practical Needs & Shipping News

Our family has been incredibly fortunate to have the use of a military APO mail box to ship most of our belongings here to Afghanistan. It has now come to our attention that shipping through the APO will only be possible on an extremely restricted scale from this point in time on. If you are planning on shipping anything to us through the APO, larger than a 10 X 12 manila envelope we need to be informed first. The ECI team needs to keep this privilege of having an APO mail box so we must comply with their requests and reduce the use of their services especially for packages.

We do have a PO Box here in Kabul that is not as secure but will allow us to receive large amounts of packages of any size. The biggest restriction of using the PO Box address is that all items will be inspected so no offensive materials such as Christian literature or pork food products will be allowed. Our new shipping address is:

**ECI  
Ray Siebring  
PO Box 5608  
Kabul, Afghanistan**

We want to thank so many for their love and support through care packages we have received. It has made a big difference in our easy of adjustment to our new culture and home. We have continually been asked what some of our practical needs are besides prayer and financial support. So in order to answer this question as efficiently as possible we have included a partial list of items in this article. Thank you again for your support. We hope to share with you soon some stories of the work being accomplished here on your behalf as your partners in this work.— Ray

- Rechargeable Batteries, all sizes
- Coffee, Starbucks, Dunkin, Tim's
- Solar Patio Lights, for security
- Aluminum Tape, 8 rolls
- Doll House and furniture
- Drakes Flake Pastries
- Gummy Bear Vitamins (Wal-Mart)
- Toilet Bowl Deodorant Pucks & Holder



### Home Sweet Home

As I left the Afghanistan airport heading through town towards our new home, I felt overwhelmed with emotion. No pictures or classes could prepare me for what I could see and smell outside my car window. Destruction, filth and poverty surrounded the beautiful landscape.

Garbage and debris covered the roads. People living in bombed out buildings with raw sewage running out into the streets. All I could think is, God, how can people live like this?!

Our family lives like kings compared to most of our Afghan neighbors but in poverty compared to our homelands standards. There are many struggles such as water and electrical issues and we may not have all the conveniences of home but, we are so blessed!!

I always considered myself a fairly selfless person. That is, until Afghanistan! Now I am discovering how very selfish I am. I can't recall a time that I thanked God for electricity, clean drinking water, trash pick up, sewage systems, hospitals, traffic lights, uncorrupt police, justice and government services...etc. I didn't even think about these things until I no longer had them. How many things in our lives do we just take things for granted? I know I have been ungrateful of all the little blessings God has given to me that make daily life more convenient.

Now it is my opportunity to serve the people of Afghanistan and share the many blessings we have received. The greatest blessing of course being my faith. I know I am here to learn as much as I am here to be of any help to the people of Afghanistan - Julie





## From Darkness To Light...



One evening not so long ago we were sitting together as a family under our battery powered lantern when the city power came on. It was as if the whole house had just come alive. The fans began to cool our sweating bodies, the kid's ran to their room to take advantage of the power to watch a movie on their computer who's battery had long since been depleted. I scramble to plug in anything that can be recharged and try to begin my work on my computer as well. Julie was temporarily relieved that she can open the fridge door without worrying about letting out the cold and that we had security lights on outside in the darkness for our guard to see and protect us. Then just as our family has begun to enjoy the flow of electron's, we were once again plunged into darkness and the stark reality of our situation here in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Electricity is unreliable and sometime a scarce commodity here in Kabul. There has been a lot of progress with the electricity in the city but there are still several area's that are unpowered and those like our area that are powered are only powered part of the time. Apparently from what we have been told by those living in this house previous to us was that the power was only on a few hours every three days in the winter. We are presently enjoying at least some power most every day.

Our family will soon be moving out of our temporary housing at the guest house and moving to an area of the city that does not have any electricity. This is an area of the city that has most of the NGO families and schools and is cheaper than the area we are presently in. Part of the reason it is cheaper is that there is such a large amount of destruction from the wars in this area. We have to find a sustainable solution to our electrical needs. It is not hard to notice when you are sitting in the darkness who around you has light (power). This sent me down the road to research how they are maintaining sustained power. This has some great spiritual parallels but for now I am just talking about electricity.

After much time I had found most of the NGO (Non Governmental Workers) had at the least a minimal solar electric system to sustain them through the times city power was off. I was directed to a like minded NGO that had a program that helps set up these solar electric systems for other like minded workers in the country. The estimated cost of the system needed is 7000.00. We have begun to save for this installation and thought now would be a great opportunity to put out the word of a need since so many have asked how they could help us and ECI here in Afghanistan.

Ah reality has struck again. The power has gone out. It is 8:00 AM and the sweat has already begun to roll as the heat of the day begins. I have been working on this article for an hour so it was a nice long stretch of power. Unfortunately I must end this before my battery runs out.

In closing, I would ask if you would prayerfully consider contributing towards the cost of this solar electric system? Maybe you could afford to give 10.00 or 50.00. The amount is not as important as the participation of as many people as possible. Please feel free to give or not to give according to what you believe the Lord is directing you to do. Thank you for your support and prayers. Bye for now. – Ray Siebring



P.S. For those who are reading this newsletter electronically click here to send a response.



### Solar Electric Project

Amount Needed	7000.00
Amount Received	0.00
Percentage Complete	0%

You can click the links below to donate online or for donor information. For USA donors there is the option of giving online by credit card.

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### Praise & Prayer

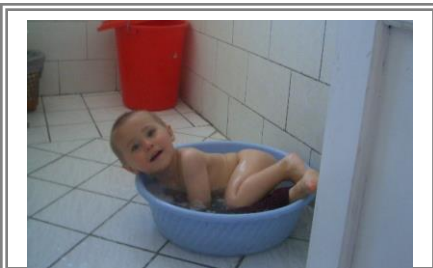
#### Praise:

- Family is settling well and building relationships with locals.
- Most of our boxes of supplies and possessions have arrived safely.

#### Prayer

- Our monthly support to come up to the needed levels - \$5400.00
- Financial provision for Solar electric project. - \$7000.00
- Families health and security.

[Click here to send us a prayer request](#)



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