

# Moving Into the Global Neighborhood

by [Clark Cowden](#)

This week, I flew from San Diego, CA to visit my son who is spending a semester studying in Oxford, England. While there, I was invited to attend a church home group meeting that was like none I had ever experienced before.

There were only half of dozen of us present. Joe (I have changed their names) was the minister. Joe works full-time installing boilers. The profits from the company go to support the ministries of the church. They are seeking to minister to single moms, street girls, and some of the 65% of children in England who grow up in divorced or single parent homes. They also run a couple of community homes. Joe is going to visit his divorced parents next week, who now live in Spain.

Ahmed grew up in a Muslim home in England. He didn't like the worship services because they were always in Arabic, and Ahmed speaks only English. He became disillusioned with Islam when they couldn't answer his questions about the faith, and pressured him to simply accept their answers as truth. Ahmed and Joe have been friends for a long time, but never talked about their faith with each other, until a mutual friend died. Joe invited Ahmed to their home group meetings, and Ahmed has been coming for over a year now. He is not a Christian yet, but he is seeking after the truth, and really likes being with the community of believers.

Nancy is an art teacher. She does not own a car. She takes the bus to work everyday. She rents out rooms in her home to make some extra money (I am renting a room from her this week).

David was our host. We met in the small 10' x 15' living room in his rowhouse. He moved to England from Poland, met a girl from Brazil, and they got married. He became a Christian last year. He works at an auto plant nearby, and tells his fellow workers about Christ. Ahmed told me that David is 'full of Jesus' (this is a compliment).

Louise could not be with us for this evening. She is not a convert, but also attends regularly.

We watched a DVD about the lives of Peter and Paul on David's computer screen. We discussed it afterwards, and had an energetic prayer session afterwards. (Ahmed did not pray, but listened, and did not feel uncomfortable). Then we shared oranges, grapes, salad, nuts, and chocolates.

Joe tells me that it is very difficult to 'speak the gospel into our culture'. But, inch by inch, in a seemingly painstaking way, I observe that here is a group of believers that is attempting to move back into the global neighborhood, rubbing shoulders with immigrants from other countries, people with no faith, and people with lots of questions. I felt a genuine warmth and hospitality as we talked and prayed and ate together. They did not pretend to have all the answers, but they know their Savior, what Christ has done in their lives, and what He can do in the lives of others and in their community. They are exploring, experimenting, and reaching across barriers to befriend people who are different from themselves.

I came away quite impressed with this small group of believers. I came away feeling privileged that they had welcomed me, a stranger, into their midst. I came away thinking that I have a lot to learn.

Clark Cowden