

We didn't stay and later found a much smaller (congregation of about 20) Baptist church which we thoroughly enjoyed attending.

Next stop Kuwait – where we did have a church to attend on Sunday evenings. However, as the Kuwaiti weekend was Friday and Saturday for businesses and Thursday and Friday for schools – family day had to be Friday. This was difficult as the children having been to school that day (starting at 7.30am) would fall asleep in church. In the end I attended without the children as it was just too late for them.

After 3 years we moved to West Malaysia, to Kula Lumpur. This was very different from East Malaysia which comprises two Christian states. The other twelve states of Malaysia are Muslim but quite tolerant of other religions, with two states being official Shariah states – i.e. very strict. With the blend of Chinese and Indian Malaysians as well as the Malays themselves all religions are represented and tolerated. In fact with the correct timing one could be celebrating the end of Ramadan and Chinese New Year on the same day, or the end of Ramadan and Christmas Day on the same day, the nicest thing being that all are observed by the Malaysians, resulting in 17 Bank Holidays a year! Good Friday is a Bank Holiday in East Malaysia but not in West Malaysia. Thus access to church was no problem and I was even able to attend an Alpha Course there –not at the start of my Christian journey but better late than never.

We then had a year in Buenos Aires where we were restricted by the language again. Only certain churches had a service in English on Sundays. One church, originally called the International Baptist church renamed itself to the International Bible Church as the Pastor realized that his congregation attended because they wanted to worship in English (which wasn't necessarily their native language) and whilst there were actually fourteen nationalities in the church there were very few Baptists! A truly international church which I enjoyed attending.

We are currently living in Brunei, where it is a crime to evangelise to a Muslim and where Muslims just aren't allowed to convert. Religions other than Islam are under strict control of the Government. No foreign ministers of other religions are allowed to practise in the country so our three Christian churches that are allowed to operate have Chinese Malaysian Christian Pastors and we come under a Diocese in Sarawak, in neighbouring East Malaysia. All other activities need permission and public displays of Christian symbols are prohibited, including positioning your Christmas tree where it can be seen from the street. I attend a Ladies Bible Study group but we always have to bring a dish of food so that if we are "raided" the Bibles can be put out of sight and we are to all intents and purposes having yet another coffee morning!!

Oh, and by the way the name of my church in Brunei is called St James!!

Nadia Taylor