

Conversations with God Book 3

Guidebook

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by Alissa Goepron

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in 1968 in the South West of England, Alissa moved at the age of two to Birmingham where she grew up and went to school. From an early age she felt passionately that she wanted to see the world and experience first hand how other people lived. As soon as she left school at 18 she managed to get a job as a volunteer in a small school in La Ceiba, Honduras. It was an eye opening year in which she learnt Spanish and travelled widely in Honduras and Guatemala seeing dreadful poverty but also experiencing incredible generosity and openness from the people there, particularly the native Indian people in Guatemala.

Although she had a place waiting for her to study Religious Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (London University) she found, after a year abroad, that this course of study no longer appealed. She managed to change to Chinese, a choice placed purely on the desire to learn something completely new. She loved learning, not only the language but also about the culture, the history and the philosophy. The course involved studying for a year at a Chinese University in Beijing in 1989 – the year of the Tiananmen incident which Alissa witnessed at close hand.

On completing her degree she taught English in Taiwan and then spent a while travelling in Indonesia. She fell in love with the way of life there and after briefly returning to England, found a job teaching English in Surabaya on the island of Java. Soon after starting the job she met Zainul who she married two years later. She spent much of the next twelve years in Indonesia moving from Surabaya to Jakarta, Surabaya again and then, after a year back in England, to Lampung in Sumatera, ending up finally on the island of Bali. She taught in many different capacities, to children and adults from a wide variety of backgrounds and loved being able to share in the ideas, thoughts and feelings of her students.

In 1998 her first son William was born and then in 2001, Oscar, her second son arrived. Her relationship with Zainul, however, was not always easy and after 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq, a small but growing number of Indonesian Muslims became more radicalised, including Zainul. He became angry and aggressive towards the West and western values and started to take this aggression out on his wife. At the start of 2005 Alissa decided that for her own safety she had to leave and come back to England with William and Oscar. It was a very difficult decision to make, as it meant saying goodbye to all of Zainul's family whom she loved dearly and who had accepted her totally into their family.

After returning to England she decided to concentrate fully on her two children, living on state benefits, while volunteering in schools and on an organic farm. She also took the time to explore her life on a spiritual level, something she'd done as a teenager and in her twenties but which had been pushed aside with the pressures of working and bringing up children. That, she feels, is the main

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problem facing people today – although many would love to be more spiritually aware, the pressures of day to day living and working mean that the task of examining the real meaning of LIFE, LOVE and GOD gets pushed into the background.

She has recently re-entered the world of work and is now studying to become a secondary school (high school) teacher in languages. She hopes to be able to carry the peace and knowledge she has found in her heart, since reading the Conversations with God books, with her into schools and working life, and find a way of spreading this knowledge to British teenagers. She lives at present in South Somerset in South West England.