

Ellen and I were seated with friends we loved, in a place we loved and had visited many times. Of our many international destinations, this was a favorite. Our friends, demonstrating their trust in the depth of our relationship, were recalling the many cultural faux pas I had made. From hand gestures and seating postures unknowingly inappropriate to my failed attempts at speaking their language. Oh, the mistakes I made when I didn't know what I didn't know.

A specific example. I arrived early – very early – at an Arabic speaking church where I was to be the guest speaker. I knew the pastor had many tasks and people to attend to so after greeting him I went to the front row and sat down to relax, enjoy a few minutes of quiet time and review my notes. In my relaxed state of mind, I leaned back and crossed my legs. In just seconds the pastor rushed to the front and whispered that I must not cross my legs and leave the sole of my shoe exposed in the air. He graciously yet insistently instructed me to keep both feet solidly on the floor and not to cross my legs again. Showing the sole of your shoe has long been an insult in the Arabic culture. Anyone remember the man who threw a shoe at President George W. Bush?

When you don't know what you don't know. The lesson learned? Among other things – stay humble. Ellen and I go to SE Asia with an eager excitement, and with the realization that we don't know what we don't know. There is so much that we don't know. So we stay humble. We try to be quick learners. And most of all ... we pray that God's love will shine through us.

Thank you for your prayerful support as we follow the leading of our God of unfailing love.

a friend,

Roger and Ellen