

The Drum Family

January 2014



As the old year was coming to a close and the new year was approaching, I was in a place of reflection, a place of looking back on what had been our life in Peru and what our life looks like now. And in between all of that has been several months of transition and tough debriefing and counseling to try to see the lessons learned, to try to bring closure to a season in our lives that was now over, and to try to step forward into what is now to be a different place, a different home, a different culture and a different way of doing things. It was a tough year, to say the least. I struggle with the change, as it is so radically different in every aspect. The difference in rural village ministry and urban center ministry is huge! The biggest/toughest part of our new place for me, is that the ministry in Peru was project-based... there was a project or program (Kuyay Talpuy—the education centers, the abandoned elderly feeding program, the greenhouse and small farm, the Kid's Club, etc) and the project existed for the purpose of outreach, a jumping off point for discipleship, a place that people came to for a specific reason and we were able to reach out to them based on the need that was being met. It was a great ministry and we were so blessed that God allowed us to be a part of it for those years. In our new setting in Spain, ministry is not project-based at all. It is people-based or relationship-based. That is NOT to say that Peru wasn't focused on people or relationships, but to say that there was a project that helped to bond them, a need that helped to unite them and helped us to reach out to them and build relationship and community. Here in Spain, there is no project, no program, no point-of-need that brings everyone in to a specific location or for a specific reason. It is just people and relationship, one-on-one a lot of the time, sometimes a small group.

That is all fine and good, and I love it because I love people and I love relationship and I love community. Not complaining, for sure!!! But here is the problem... what do I write about when I write to you? I no longer have funny goat stories or photos of silly kids doing silly things. I no longer have cute videos of our school classes, or stories of trying to live life in rural Peru. I can no longer tell you of the measurable things... the numbers of students in our programs or the numbers of parents who are attending workshops and bible studies or the numbers of people who are coming to Christ. And, truth be told, all of those things are so ingrained in our North American culture and worldview that we begin to see ourselves as successful or as failures based on them. So all of those years when I had all of those great stories to tell, I felt like I was doing a good job. I could somehow measure myself (however falsely) based on the measurements of the ministry programs. And my readers measured our successes and failures, too. But now, we don't have those measurements any longer. Which leads me to the downward cycle of measuring myself against the invisible, and not knowing how I measure up.

You see, our work now is so very confidential. We now work with immigrants, some of whom are illegal,

Glitter...

some of whom are legal but are in hiding for various reasons. We now work as counselors and coaches, which by law is confidential. We now do a lot of one-on-one work to help people survive their situations, put their lives back together, and learn to thrive in them. But those stories are THEIR stories, and we aren't at liberty to share them.

For the past 10 days or so, we had the privilege of hosting a CCW peer from the Middle East for Christmas. We had a lot of fun and a lot of laughs. We also had some serious talks about heart matters, and she shed some important light for me. As usual, we were supposed to be helping her, and instead, she made a huge impact on ME!

She reminded me of the qualities of glitter. Silly, huh?! You see, she is a teacher, too, and she reminded me of all of the crazy glitter projects that we do with our students. If you have ever used glitter, you know that it gets everywhere! You might get it where you wanted it to be, but I guarantee that you are going to get it into a hundred other places, too. It just spreads. Well, to bring glitter to the story at hand... my friend has struggled with the same issue that I now struggle with. She works in a high security situation. She is in a different culture in a different language and relationships are difficult, at best. How do you do ministry and life in that? How do you measure success and fruitfulness in that? How do you write home about it? How do you measure 'job performance' in relationships and people-based work? We talked about this and how much I was struggling right now with that, and she said 'glitter'. During her prayers about this issue, she was pouring out her heart to God and he told

her 'glitter', so she shared it with me.

You see, sometimes, just living life with others is what we do. But we have to do it with intentionality and authenticity. So, for example, when I am with my friend from Brazil and she asks how I am doing, "fine" is not a good enough answer. I tell her the truth — *"being an immigrant and a newcomer to this culture is hard."* But **I also add how the Bible talks about being immigrants and foreigners in another land. It talks about feeling abandoned or scared, like orphans. All of us, as immigrants, have left "home". We are foreigners. We have left some family behind. We are sometimes scared and alone. This conversation really happened, and you know what my friend said? She thought for a minute and said, "You know, Jesus was an immigrant. He went to foreign lands, too, don't you think? I think we will be okay with Him." It was a quick conversation, said as we waited for coffee, no more. But it bonded us to each other a little deeper. Without really trying very hard, some glitter got spread around. And the best part is, the glitter that she and I spread that day, got spread around to others. She shared our story with others, and others began to open up with their stories and struggles.**

It wasn't a program. It wasn't a fantastic bible study that I had prepared and worked on and shared, it wasn't even planned. It was just living life and being authentic. It's not really even measureable.

So thankful for my peer who shared her glitter with me, and who helped me to see that I share glitter with others in various ways. They may not be obvious and they may not be measureable, but His glitter goes everywhere when you reach out and touch someone.

~*Laurie*

(see quote below from Jesus Calling devo)

"When you do routine tasks for Me, they gain meaning and even some sparkle. Your efforts become a way of expressing your love for Me. The more you love Me, the more you can enjoy doing tasks devoted to Me. I am less concerned about the outcome of your work than the attitude of your heart. When your deepest motive is to please Me, I deem your work good."

Prayers and praise... We will travel on Jan. 11-23 to The States to attend a training and conference for all missionaries in The Mission Society. Almost 200 of us will convene for several days of training and working together. This is the first time in 30 years that all TMS missionaries have been called back at the same time. We usually train according to our region of the globe. This is an exciting time for all! Billy and I will be leading a 3-day training on Peer Coaching Skills. Super excited to train our peers in this skill that has proven so wonderful for us and for ministry! Please pray for our workshop and our teaching skills, for all the travel that this entails, and for Sarah as she misses 2 weeks of school in order to train with other missionary children. Pray for our health as we head into this intense time - - long hours + intense learning + stress + travel + time zone change tends to add up to diminished defenses and declining health.

Praises for our oldest son, Ryan - he recently received the job that he has been waiting for... he is a full-time Aquarist / Herpetologist for the Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi! The sea turtles and all reptiles/amphibians are in his care. So happy for him! If you are ever in Corpus Christi, go visit the TSA and give a shout out to Ryan!

Pray for our continued cultural learning and relationship building here in Spain, as well as with the peers that we serve around the globe.

Pray for both of our boys back in Texas (Ryan and Miles) and for our families and friends that we miss so much as we begin this new year.

Did you know???

Spanish History is chock full of religious conflict and conquest, culture and drama

In learning about Spain and her history, we have visited many historical sights and museums, we have been reading history and archeology studies, and we ask lots of questions of locals. The Iberian Peninsula (now Spain) has been home to many cultures. Our current home is built atop a Roman village and the artifacts found during the construction are on display in the museum in our town. One friend of ours says, "You cannot dig a hole in Spain and not find a Roman artifact." It appears that he is correct. Every town and place that we have visited has relics of Roman architecture, aqueducts, and roads. Spain was home to many from Jewish cultures. There are several ruins of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries in our area. Their story is not so romantic and ended very poorly... a sad tale, for sure. The Arabic influence is astounding in our area of Spain, and the history and stories of those times seem to come from storybooks and fairy tales, yet they are real and true and amazing. To stand in mosques and castles and fortresses that were built in the very early years after Christ's death, to walk the halls and pace the floors and stand where princes and kings and queens and Arab rulers and knights have lived and fought and died for their religion and their freedom... indescribable. Our town has one such fortress, her story makes me sad, and I can hardly walk past one corner of the walls without tears welling up in my eyes as I think about the families that were given one night to leave the city walls or be slaughtered the next morning. A statue of a family stands on that corner depicting the event, their fleeing into the night. Walking these paths, hearing these stories, learning this culture... it all becomes so real to me and I ache for the centuries of displaced peoples.



Come visit us in Spain and walk these historical paths with us! We would love to make history come to life for you, to make it



real for you what it has meant to be a follower, a believer, and to try to find that straight path in The Kingdom. Come learn what centuries of religious history looks like, feels like, and how it impacts culture in Spain and in the world today.

DEAR BILLY AND LAURIE,

- I will pray for you.
- As God provides, I plan to partner with you by giving \$ _____ Per month / quarter / year for _____ years.
- I would like to donate a one-time gift of \$ _____



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Luke 5:12b "...they left everything and followed him."

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We were so blessed with the Christmas cards and notes (and even a couple of gifts) last month! Thank you so much for remembering us during our first Christmas in Spain. This was our first Christmas without either of our boys being with us— SO HARD! We missed home quite a bit! We were also blessed by a friend who came to visit us during Christmas break... she really helped to make our first Christmas here a sweet one, with someone to laugh with and share traditions with and talk to IN ENGLISH. It was great having her! Hope you all had a Merry Christmas and you are ready for Happy 2014!