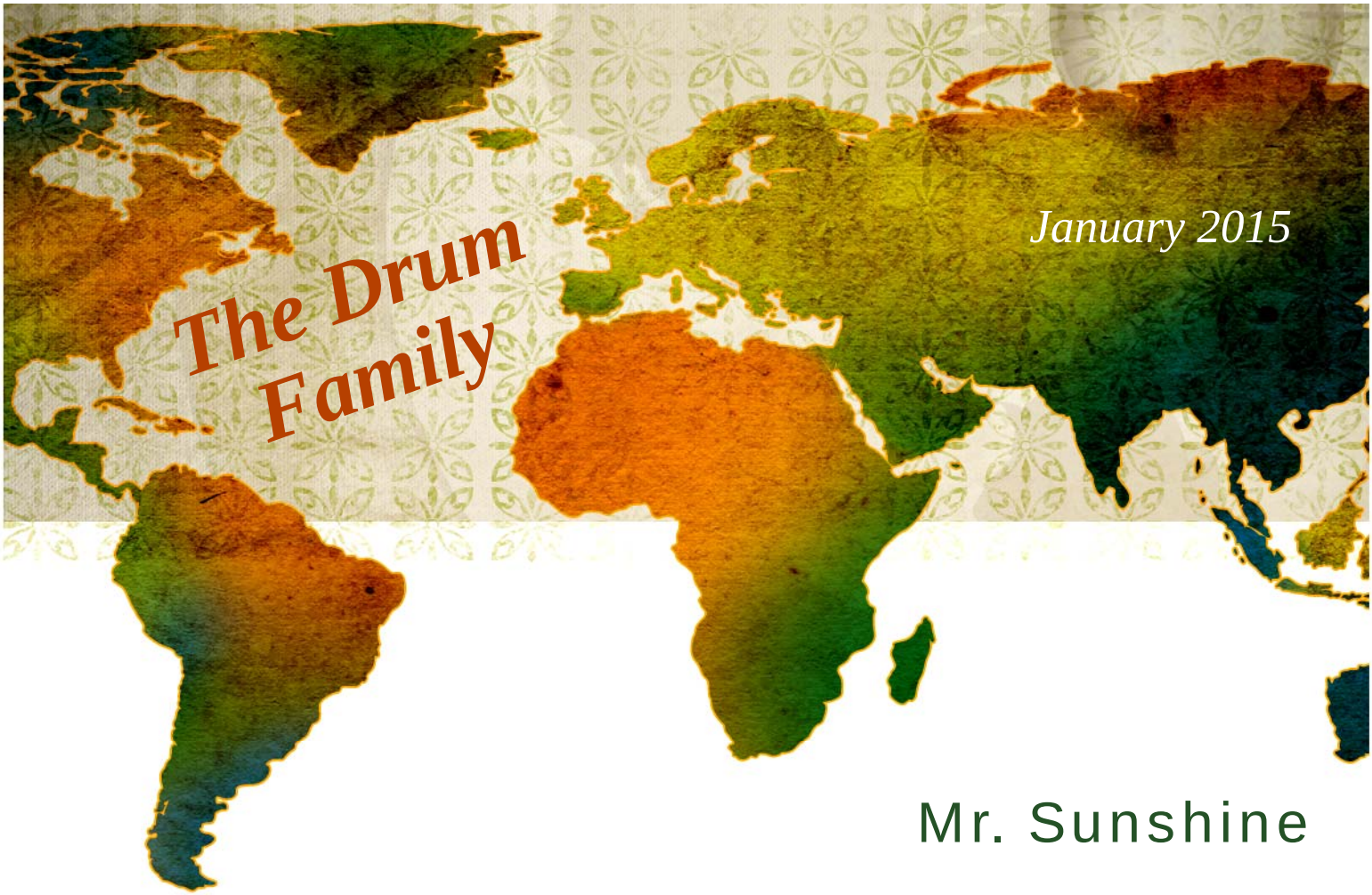


Mr. Sunshine

Sometimes, progress is barely perceivable. Sometimes, we're just looking for BNIs - barely noticeable improvements. Tiny glimmers that let us know that something is changing.

When we moved to our current house, we were excited to be out amongst farmers again. It seems to be our 'place' in life. We just seem to love being around the soil, the crops, animals, and plain country folks. We loved and missed that part of our lives from Peru. So moving to this house in between a wheat field and a field of beans and an asparagus crop felt perfect. And we met the farmer and his family next door. Great people! Instant love.

However, not everyone is super welcoming and warm. Quite the opposite for one farmer man who lives on our road. We pass him several times a day. He wears the same grumpy gruff facial expression each time. Never changes. Never smiles. Kind-of an Eeyore -type, only he appears more irritated than depressed. Almost as if just your meer presence in this world is a problem for him.

Nevertheless, we wave. We wave at him and smile. Every time. No matter what. Sarah and I stopped to talk to him once about some kittens that were at his gate, but we were not exactly met with warm glowing hugs and love. We were definitely not feeling the hospitality. Still, we smiled and thanked him, and waved as we left.

We affectionately named him "Mr. Sunshine". Not to his face, of course. We don't know his name. He hasn't shared that information with us. But in our car each day, we wave to "Mr. Sunshine" and smile a greeting in his direction. Every day. Every day. Every day.



Then one day, we saw it. A BNI - barely noticable improvement. A twitch of his hand in response to the wave. A very subtle tiny flick of the hand.

That was all we needed! The challenge was now on! We took it on as a family project. "We are going to get Mr. Sunshine to soften up if it kills us!"

We continued to wave a smile. Every day. Each time we pass his place. Each time we see him in his vehicle. Each time he walks down the road. Wave. Smile.

Continued on page 2 . . .

...Mr. Sunshine

Nod the head in his direction. Every time, we do it with the enthusiasm that says, "Hey! Sunshine! Great to see you again!" I'm sure he thinks we're nuts.

Again, we saw it. BNI. Barely Noticeable Improvement. A half-raised arm wave. Whoa!!! There may have been some shrieks of "wow!" and some cheering in the car.

Each time we saw a little improvement, we were more determined.

So now, nine months later, we are up to a full-arm over the head wave. Real acknowledgement! Honest to Goodness waving! On a good day, there is even a head nod in our direction. Progress.

I have dreams that one day Mr. Sunshine will actually smile. I'm hoping for an actual conversation one day. Maybe even grow in to his Mr. Sunshine name. Some folks are just slow to warm up. But for now, I'm celebrating the BNIs.



Sometimes, building relationships is about a wave and a smile - every day, every day, every day - and patience.

~Laurie

What's up with The Drums in February?

- We continue hosting our intern (Hannah) till May.
- Laurie goes to Turkey for a training on counseling and care for CCWs working in tough places - Feb. 8-14
- Drums host TMS Director of Field Ministries Feb 21-26
- Leading an 8-week life purpose group with 4 college-age young adults.
- We Continue our Weekly work - immigrant women's study group, adult inductive study group, youth inductive study group, coaching local pastor, training and studying with other CCWs in coaching techniques and ministries, bilingual study with a local Spaniard couple, various coaching and counseling appointments with CCWs around the globe, Billy serves on the board for a local NGO.
- Planning and preparing to host a retreat for TMS Europe missionaries… they will come to our home in March.

Coming soon… Christian Puppeteers to visit Antequera in May and lead a workshop in puppet ministry for local churches! Stay tuned for ways that you might be involved and partner with professional puppeteers and Spanish puppeteer hopefuls as they forge ahead in this special ministry initiative.

"Ministry in Spain is like football. The thing is, it's a ground game, not a passing game. It is won yard-by-yard, not by long passes and fast gains. The thing is, people back home want to see the big gains and the quick move down the field. Ministry might happen like that in other places, but it just doesn't happen like that here. It is so relational. It's one-on-one. It's little by little. It's going to take time."

~Axel (missionary from Puerto Rico to Spain)

Pray specifically this month for Laurie's trip to Turkey for a conference of mission care givers. **Pray** that it is a fruitful time of learning and connecting with others in the same role. **Pray** for Sarah and Billy as they stay behind in Spain while Laurie is away. **Pray** for Billy as he plays the single dad role for a week. **Pray** for our boys (Ryan and Miles) as they continue to live in Texas - 5000 miles away from us. For both of them, **we pray** for PEACE and JOY to be a daily part of their lives as they grow in to their adult selves.

Pray for the upcoming TMS Europe gathering that we will be hosting in Spain in March. Pray for good talks, good plans, and good relationships to be built among CCW peers.

Pray for Spain! Pray for more workers with good training and foundations in relational, incarnational work. **Pray** for relationships to open up. **Pray** for our inductive Sunday School classes (adults and youth) that they will continue to grow in faith and go deep in the Word and continue to really dig and learn. **Pray** for new believers. **Pray** for the many Latin American immigrants who are on fire for Christ and are now living in Spain… **pray** that God would ignite their passion and their confidence and help them to carry the word to their host country of Spain. **Pray** for the thousands of migrants that daily brave dangerous crossings of the Mediterranean to land on Spanish soil. **Pray** for cities and towns and villages that do not have a witness, do not have a church… **pray** that God rises up workers and believers who are willing to GO and LIVE and SERVE and LOVE in places where the gospel is not present or heard. And **pray for us** to be bridges between the many cultures that live in our area, to continue to find ways to help others understand each other and their cultural differences, to help them find common ground instead of differences, and to help them build relationships instead of walls.

Please **pray** for us as we live among our neighbors in Antequera. Please **pray** for us to shine and share the light of Christ with others. **Pray** for others to see something different in us. **Pray** for our work as we build up believers and disciples and help them gain the confidence to share with others. **Pray** for us as we continue to be asked to be in CCW teaching and training and coaching/care roles... this is our true heart and the thing that makes us sing! There is nothing better than helping others grow and watching them learn to fly! **Pray** for us to be healthy– spiritually, physically, emotionally, and relationally. **Pray** for us to experience rest, in order to have the strength to serve. When you are truly working in your sweet spot and your passion is ignited, it is easy to overwork and burn yourself out because you are so stinkin' happy and on fire in your role! **Pray** that we recognize and acknowledge our need for rest.

That time I went to Spain...

Notes from intern, Hannah Thomas, as she spends a semester learning about life in Spain.



The following is a small excerpt from Hannah's blog. We will be running a part of Hannah's writing each month in this column. You can read the complete online journal and her thoughts as she serves here by going to her blog site at http://www.holaespana2015.tumblr.com/

Issues that I thought would not exist here are all the more prevalent, specifically racism. I grew up in a very whitewashed bubble and had so many stereotypes and preconceived notions of "other people" that I didn't even know the depths of my own ignorance until it was drawn out of me (KAA work there, ask me about it, coolest representation of the kingdom I've been a part of to date). I was talking with some (*Spanish*) friends earlier in the week and they asked if I'd ever heard them call me a "*giddy*" and I said no, and asked if I should be offended. They replied with a reassuring no, that it meant I was from America or another part of Europe, specifically that I was from a country where having money is common. Spanish like people like me because I can invest in the economy and such. They then launched into a description of *"extranjeros"* outsiders/foreigners, and talked about how much they didn't like the people from South America and Africa. My Spanish is limited but I got the idea, these people have nothing to offer and so we don't want them. They went on for a little while and I became incredibly sad. This area of Spain has many immigrants, coming in search of freedom and the welcome is less than friendly. The mission of the family I work with is specifically immigrant people and this was so eye opening to how big the task they have been called to truly is. My friends, I urge you to look in your own heart - you yourself have been bought with a price, as have I, and you aren't a citizen of this world. Every single Christian is an *extranjero*, we don't belong, and yet the kingdom of heaven has opened its gates with the promise of freedom.



I hope that you will join me in my prayer for the people of Antequera to have their hearts opened to shepherd the people seeking refuge in their town.



DEAR BILLY AND LAURIE,

☐ I will pray for you.

☐ As God provides, I plan to partner with you by giving

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