



The Drum Family

August / September 2013

The First Few Days in Spain

We are finally here! We arrived in Spain on August 13th and immediately set out to find a place to live. With the help and good advice of some friends (both Spanish and North American) we settled on renting a townhome-type place in Antequera and moved in on the 21st of August.

In many ways, this is a more difficult assignment for us than Peru was. Yes, it is true that Peru was a developing world / third world country and we had issues with water quality (or with having water at all), at times with safety, with variable electricity or availability of common necessities or conveniences. Yes, Peru had an extreme climate and extreme altitude and our living conditions in Patarcocha were 'interesting'. My mother likes to frequently remind me that she thinks it is time for us to take a break from "rustic charm", and by that she means that it is time for us to live a life that includes indoor plumbing and a toilet and a life that does not include obsessing over gathering water in buckets or making sure that animals are fed and milked and safely penned for the night. I agree that life in Patarcocha was a little on the rustic side. And I agree that I had my bouts with being a little manic about water and buckets and animals and weather conditions. But, in all honesty, I have longed for those days since we moved to Spain. I have had dreams about my goats and chickens back on that

mountain. It is true that I no longer begin my days by getting out of bed to the bleating of hungry goats or the rantings of a crazy rooster, I no longer dress in many layers so I can feed and milk and gather eggs, nor do I sleepily hike down the road at dawn to Elva's house to make breakfast for 30 elderly over an open fire. But I would be dishonest if I didn't admit to you that I miss that life. I miss the days when I knew exactly what today would bring. I knew the people in my village and I knew their needs and how to reach out to them and meet them. The ministry and the needs of the people were readily visible and apparent to us. Oh, how I long for a freezing cold morning filled with rambunctious goats and squawking chickens and neighbors calling my name in the fields. I long for the days when children appeared in my kitchen door to see what we were doing or to see if Hermano Billy could give them a ride in his truck. The things that used to drive me crazy are now the things that I would die to live over again.

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Here in Spain, we have almost the exact opposite. The living conditions and health conditions are much better for us, but the ministry and needs are less obvious. The appearance of everything is more homogeneous to us. The houses all look the same. I was driven through the 'poorest part of town' the other day and I would never have known it - it looked exactly like every other neighborhood in town to me. The people don't necessarily look the same, but in their differences, I find great difficulty in knowing who is who and what is what. I cannot tell who is Spaniard and who is a visiting tourist from Great Britain or Germany until they speak. I cannot tell a Spaniard from a Romanian or a Pakistani or a Turk. Occasionally, the clothing and customs give someone's identity away, but not often. I was describing a meal that we ate the other day, and my friend said, "Oh, were the owners of the restaurant Argentinian?" I had no idea, but I wondered what the clue was that made my friend question their heritage. "Beef! Most Spaniards don't serve beef." We have a lot to learn here and a lot of in-depth study and cultural work to do.

I am ready for some sort of routine or normalcy. So far, our time has been taken up by finding a place to live and by figuring out how to do the mundane and 'normal' things that make up living life... how and where to get groceries, the rhythm and time structure to life in Spain, how to get Sarah enrolled in school, etc.



All seem like normal things that shouldn't be major issues in learning, but in another culture, they are HUGE.

The fun part is reflecting and realizing that this time around, we are learning and adapting much faster than we did in the past. In Costa Rica, I don't think we ever really learned the culture or settled in to a normalcy of life. We struggled with language and with how to do just about everything. Our culture shock was enormous and we suffered for it. In Peru, we did much better, but it still took a lot of time to settle in. The major blessing in Peru was the fact that we walked into a situation where our team leader had been on the ground there for 8 years and had a network of people and ministries around him that held us up and guided us when we needed it. This time around, we have experience and skills on our side... we have language skills that are making it so much easier to navigate daily life and ask questions of locals. We have the experience of going through rental agreements and purchases and daily shopping tasks and we draw on prior learning to help us quickly get our feet on the ground here. We are blessed to have friends who live about 20 minutes away and have been a source of encouragement and informal coaching, who have helped us understand some subtle nuances that would have taken us months to figure out, and who have introduced us to a small network of great local people who have surrounded us with love and support as we

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"You can give without loving. But you cannot love without giving."

— Amy Carmichael, missionary to India

Pray for us to find a 'groove' and a routine in our new place of service. Pray for us to build relationships and find friends. Pray for Sarah to meet other children and for her to have meaningful relationships with others. Pray for us to begin to learn culture and the nuances of language in this place. Pray for us to be ever-mindful and alert to the opportunities and people that God places before us each day.

Praises for a place to call 'home' in Antequera. We have moved in and are learning more about our town and neighbors.

Praises for a new church family in Spain! We have been attending the church that sponsored our invitation to minister in Spain and the congregation has been MORE THAN welcoming! I can't tell you what it does to your heart when you are new and filled with anxiety for so many people to greet you and welcome you and offer to help you with anything, to be invited to coffee and breakfast... just amazing, the outpouring of hospitality from this church!

Pray for our financial needs—we continue to be about \$1,800/month lower than we would like to be in our ministry account. In two months, we have experienced the deaths of three long-time supporters and friends, as well as receiving the news of serious health crisis for a couple more and loss of employment for another. Please consider how you can help... we would love to entertain any creative ideas you might have for raising funds and finding ways to make up the shortfall.

Pray for our boys—Ryan and Miles. Never stop praying for our boys! I can't tell you how hard it is to leave Texas each time we head off in service. Pray for their employment, for their financial needs, for their relationships with others, and for

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begin to live life here.

I won't lie to you—it has been a tough beginning for me. From the outside, it seems that this life would be a much easier one for us. It seems that a more mainline mainstream culture would be a walk in the park. But it has been much tougher for me than I expected. And there is the key—my own expectations are getting in the way. I didn't expect to feel like a fish out of water, loving my mud house on a mountain in a third world country more than I love this townhome in Spain. I didn't expect to cry over missing the companionship of my dog and my cat. I didn't expect to feel deep disappointment over the lack of green space and the inability to have a garden or grow a tomato or dig in the dirt. I didn't expect to shed tears when the school decided to enroll Sarah in the 5th grade instead of the 4th because of her birth year—I didn't expect to feel a deep loss of control over my child's education. I did not expect to feel my pride and intellect and self esteem damaged by the fact that I cannot fill out the forms for school because I don't fully understand the vocabulary they use. And I did not expect to feel abused and defeated when the telephone installation man refused to hook us up because of a mistake on the initial contract, causing us to wait even longer for service. You see, I have been trained extensively in culture shock - I should be an expert on the subject by now. I know the signs and I know the causes. I know that the gap between my own expectations and the actual performance and reality of things is a great part of this initial shock, and yet, here I am again. I have fallen victim to my own expectations and inability to realistically predict what life would be like here.

In another week, life will take yet another turn and Sarah will begin school. Our days will take on a new appearance as we learn to work around her schedule. We will begin to meet in spiritual community with some friends each week. Our work with counseling and coaching other missionaries has already begun and we spend time each week connecting with them and building those relationships.

We have a lot to learn before it is going to be very apparent to us exactly what we will be doing locally in ministry. In the meantime, we will build relationships and get involved in our new church and work to support the other missionaries and cross-cultural workers we serve in Europe and The Middle East. We have a meeting with friends and colleagues from another agency next week to discuss how we can work in community with each other, how we can help support each other, and how we can encourage and reinforce the efforts of each other in our work.

Blessings to all of you! Thank you for your continued prayers and support. You mean the world to us!

~Laurie & Billy

Sarah loads food into boxes for the local food pantry run by our church.



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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