

The Drum Family

December 2014



Holidays Away from Home

This year marks our second holiday season in Spain and our second Thanksgiving and Christmas away from family. That part is tough! When we were in Peru, it always just ‘worked out’ that family was able to come visit us at Christmas time, or we were back in Texas for furlough or a mandatory meeting or training in The States. So we hadn’t ever experienced truly being without family on the major family holidays until the past year.

Last week, we celebrated our second Thanksgiving in Spain. Newsflash... Spain does not celebrate Thanksgiving. I know, I know... some of you are astonished by that. ☺ So, Thanksgiving Day came and went with little fanfare. Sarah went to school. We worked: we held a Bible study in the house, we trained a missionary couple in coaching skills, Laurie led her disciple group in Campillos. Business as usual. We did take some time to phone family and talk to folks back home as they sat down to have their feasts. The highlight for us was getting to speak to both of our boys. One was having Thanksgiving with his grandmother. The other was eating with his girlfriend’s family. Both have jobs that required them to not leave town because they had to be back at work early Friday morning.

Now, before you get all upset thinking that we missed Thanksgiving, take heart... we hosted three other missionary families in our home for a feast on Saturday. One family is from Mexico, one from Puerto Rico, and one from USA/Canada, plus our family from the great country of TEXAS (hee hee!). We put tables together and made one long dining room table that stretched the length of my house. Everyone brought food. We ate, we laughed, we ate more, we laughed more... it was great! Between dinner and dessert, we each read a verse from the Bible on giving thanks, then we each talked about what we are thankful for. We discussed how difficult our first year in Antequera has been for each of us (3 of the 4 families have arrived here within the past year to 18 months) and how thankful we are to have found good friends and good community, both among each other as missionaries, and also among the Spanish people in town and in our church families. We are so thankful for each of these families and what they have meant to us as we work here.



As to Christmas... What does Christmas look like for us? Last year, we had only been in Spain for a couple of months by the time Christmas came around. We still didn’t have ‘community’ as far as a good friend group goes. We had the beginnings of friendships brewing. And church... well, the protestant church and Christmas are a whole other ball game here in Spain. Bottom line, there is a big division between distinguishing themselves from the Catholic church. Now this sounds silly to those of you in the USA, but it is

...Holidays away from home

a big deal here. Think of it as a type of denominational battle. Catholics think of all protestant churches as 'sects' and the evangelicals are 'strange' and radical rebels. Evangelicals / protestants think that Catholics are all idol-worshippers and shallow and opposed to studying the bible or knowing much about Jesus. So, long story short, if the Catholic church does something, then the protestant church opposes it and does the opposite. Therefore, Christmas is a bone of contingency. Catholics use nativity scenes, so protestants do not. Catholics use Christmas trees, so protestants do not. I know - it sounds nuts!!! But, that's the culture where we live.

So, what do we do??? Well, we have a Christmas tree in our house. And we have a nativity scene. (Maybe we ARE radical rebels?!) Last year, the pastor came to our home and saw these things. He said, "Some people in the church wouldn't like that. But I don't mind it." Whew! Good.

On that subject, the church is having a little bit of a coup this year. Our protestant church is going to do a Christmas play and have a Christmas service, complete with a re-enactment of the Christmas story and Christmas carols and (gasp!) they are decorating and using a Christmas tree! (Katy, bar the door! The world might end on Dec. 21st at 11 a.m. in Antequera, Spain.) There has been no shortage of grumbling and complaining by some members. But this pastor is bound and determined to celebrate the birth of Christ, and not just the coming of the Three Wise Men! (oh, PS... Spain doesn't do Santa, either. They do Christmas gifts on Jan. 6th for the coming of the Three Wise Men.)



Our youth class is doing the Christmas story for the church. For the past couple of weeks, we have been preparing by making scenery and reading through the Scripture and practicing the different scenes of the story. It has been a fun learning experience for the kids! They wanted to put pigs in the manger scene, but one youth knew a little something about the Jewish culture and pigs... a small argument ensued, followed by the great learning moment about pigs and culture. I love that they are learning as they go, that they are reading Scripture carefully, and that they are teaching each other (with a little guiding and correction on our part).

As to Christmas in our home, I'm not quite sure what that will look like yet. Last year, we hosted a young lady from the USA who worked and lived in a Middle Eastern country (sorry - I can't give details for security reasons). We had Christmas for her here in a Christian context and provided 'family' for her as she was far from home, too. On the issue of pork... living in the ME, she couldn't ever eat pork. So when she was here, we had a ham on Christmas day. We had bacon for breakfast. I think she ate a ham sandwich every day! On her last day, she made a baggie of leftover ham to take with her to eat on the train before she got to the airport. Too funny! For us, being away from our boys and families was hard, but hosting someone in our home and making 'family' for her somehow eased that sorrow.

This year? Who knows... maybe we will find someone else to host! Or maybe we will share the holiday with friends. We're not quite sure yet. I do know that we look forward to next year, when we KNOW that we will be going home for a visit at Christmas time!

Merry Christmas / Feliz Navidad! Blessings to you!

~Laurie & Billy

O Come All Ye Faithful, Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, Born the King of Angels;

O Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing all that hear in heaven God's holy word.
Give to our Father glory in the Highest;

~from "O Come All Ye Faithful", originally "Adeste Fideles" in Latin

We are still waiting on the final visa confirmation for our renewal. We are one month overdue right now, but our lawyer continues to assure us that we are okay as long as it is in-process. Please **pray** that we are approved soon and that the stress of waiting is lifted.

Pray for our relationships with both Spaniards and immigrants to Spain. **Pray** for new believers. **Pray** for the adult bible study group "Café con Jesus", as we continue to grow and learn together. **Pray** for the youth Sunday School class as they prepare to share the Christmas story during worship on Dec. 21—they are putting on a live drama mixed with a puppet show. **Pray** for cities and towns and villages that do not have a witness, do not have a church... one of these towns is Campillos, the town where Laurie leads a small cell group on Thursdays.

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 to be healthy—spiritually, physically, emotionally, and relationally. **Pray** for us to experience rest, in order to have the strength to serve. **Pray** for us to stay mentally healthy during this holiday season away from family and friends and not let the emotions turn to from joy to sadness as we miss loved ones and spend Christmas away from home again. Next year feels like a very long time to wait before we can go back to Texas to see our boys and families again.

Holiday Happenings in Spain...



Thanksgiving dinner at our house



Billy and his little buddy, Samuel, making gravy in the kitchen.



Billy found a pot and a burner for frying a turkey!



Rosa and Marlene learning to make pumpkin bread during Laurie's disciple group.



Laurie tried to cook the biggest sweet potato we have ever seen!



Hugs and Kisses to you all as you celebrate the holiday season! Know that you are thought of and loved in Spain!

~Laurie & Billy



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.

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Sharing the Love of Christ with the least, the lost, and the left out... immigrants, displaced peoples, the lonely, the abandoned, those who need a friend.

Nurturing and developing people to be healthy spiritually, physically, emotionally, and relationally - because "care" is not just an emotional feeling word, "care" is a verb - an action. That's who we are... the care-givers!

Drum's Contact Info

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Did you know that [end-of-year giving](#) is what helps us survive the other 11 months? By November, our budget and ministry funds are running low. This is also the time of year when we are looking ahead and making plans for the coming year. You can help us with a special [end-of-year gift](#). And by giving on-line, you don't need to worry about getting that check in the mail and post-marked by Dec. 31st. Your tax deductible donation is immediately recorded and your tax receipt will be on it's way. Easy as pie!

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