



July 2014

How is your tent?

There are many different types of tents in this world. I remember being a Girl Scout and having the old-style canvas tents with wooden poles and big metal stakes. Those things were NOT the easiest tents to build! Then I remember the progression to nicer nylon tents with aluminum poles. As I aged and grew (in height and weight!), tents seemed to have done the opposite = they've gotten lighter and smaller. I remember getting our first backpack tents... tiny little things with fiberglass poles connected by elastic cables that almost built themselves.

Tents go way back. I don't know when the first tents came on the scene, but it's a long time ago. Probably invented by somebody's kid when he took the family blankets and built the very first under-the-table tent in the family living room! Who knows. But I do know that tents are in the Bible, so I can rest assured that they were around back then, for sure.

Yes, tents have evolved in size and style and weight and usage. But one thing has stayed relatively the same... they all have a support system. Fabric doesn't just suspend above us and create shelter. The shelter has support.

Most of us have spent our lives building our personal "tents", or support systems that shelter us in life. We have family and friends that create a part of our support structure. We have church families, Sunday School groups, small groups and Bible study fellowships that give us another form of support and structure in life. We have mentors and peers and helpers in our life that are there to listen to us, to help guide us and give us advice, who lend a hand and a shoulder when needed. And we have professional support systems in our lives - doctors, counselors, coaches - many times these are the ones we turn to when we need a big boost or lift or specific help. Of course, God is our number one support - our center pole, if you will. When all is going well and life is functioning in a normal fashion, we have support systems in place and we are sheltered and feel loved and, well, supported.

But what happens when your support systems begin to fail, or if they aren't accessible to us any longer? What happens when you pitch a tent and you are missing a pole? What if one pole breaks? Have you ever been camping when you have a system failure and you are missing poles or have a broken pole?

That is exactly what happens to immigrants and cross-cultural workers (missionaries). All of the sudden, we find ourselves in tents that suddenly aren't working very well because we are missing some support poles.

God has not abandoned us, so that's the good news! We still have a Center Pole. But for immigrants and CCWs / missionaries, we suddenly find ourselves in situations where we no longer have our church families (or they aren't easily accessible to us). We find

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ourselves in places where the professional systems of doctors and counselors and coaches is vastly different (or non-existent) and we aren't sure where to turn when we need help. The tent pole that would be Family and Friends is suddenly reduced to only a couple of people who may actually be living with us in our new situation (spouse, child), and our extended family and friend groups are now far, far away. No longer can we meet our best friend for some one-on-one time or vent to them when we've had a crazy day. No longer does Mom come to keep the kids so we can get away for a date night or a much needed weekend away.

I remember a time, back in The States, when I had surgery on a ruptured disc in my back. I think back to all of my support people who rallied around to help care for kids, who brought meals by the house, who called to check on me, who came to the hospital to sit with Billy and pray while I was in surgery... people even came and cleaned my house while I recuperated!

When you take on 'immigrant status' - when you leave your home country and you go to live in another place far, far away - you lose many of your natural support systems. And suddenly, your tent looks like this:

Billy and I are no exception to this situation. When we chose to follow God's call to be cross-cultural witnesses, we suddenly found ourselves in situations where our support systems were not accessible or non-existent. We have had illnesses in other countries, illnesses that required doctors and counselors and navigating a system that we didn't understand in a language that was vastly different from our own.



We have had LONG stretches (like YEARS) where we didn't go on dates or have any time alone because we didn't have anyone to care for Sarah. We have missed Bible study and church in our heart language. We have greatly missed having our friend group from back home. At times, these missing support systems seemed like they might overwhelm us and our tent might collapse. If it weren't for our Center Pole in God, surely we would have succumbed to pressure and strain and gone home a long time ago.

More good news... Support systems can be rebuilt! There are 'replacement poles' to be found! It takes time and intentionality, but we have been able to find new in-country friends and build the beginnings of support systems for ourselves in our new context. And, we are helping others do the same.

We stand as support systems for others. In our coaching and counseling roles, we help others who are in need of a listening ear and a shoulder. In some circles, we are mentors. In other circles, we serve as church family, as bible study friends, and as small group members for immigrants. We serve other cross-cultural witnesses as mentors and trainers and peer support. We have built friendships in Spain with Brazilians and Nicaraguans and Brits, Puerto Ricans and Spaniards, Mexicans and Gitanos (gypsies), just to name a few. Slowly, we are building our support systems again, as well as becoming support systems for others whose tents are a little shaky.

So, how is your tent? When you reach out to family or friends this month, think about an immigrant or cross-cultural witness / missionary who is finding themselves without that support. When you go to church or have dinner with your small group or coffee with your bible study class, think of those around the world who are looking for that kind of fellowship and support. Maybe you can reach out and help someone re-build a support pole in their tent. Blessings!!!

~Laurie

"Spirituality emerged as a fundamental guidepost in Wholeheartedness.

Not religiosity but the deeply held belief that we are inextricably connected to one another by a force greater than ourselves—a force grounded in love and compassion."

— Brené Brown, [Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead](#)

Pray for those who we minister to and among. Pray for immigrants, for missionaries, and for our neighbors. Pray that we may be a light for them, that we may be support for them, and that we may be friends and family to all who need it.

Pray for Spain! Pray for more mission-minded people to come alongside us and help. Pray for relationships to open up. 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 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.

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.

Remember that scene in Forrest Gump???



Remember that scene in Forrest Gump when he starts to run across the country? He runs and runs and runs, through all kinds of weather and scenery. He runs alone. He runs with people. He just keeps running until he gets to the ocean.

That's pretty much been Billy's experience for the past 5+ weeks! He started walking the Camino de Santiago in May. He began in St. Jean Pied de Port, France. Each day he got up, he bandaged his feet, he found coffee and bread, hoisted his backpack on his back, and he walked. He walked and he walked and he walked. He walked from sunrise to sunset. He walked in all kinds of weather. He walked in mud and rain, in sweltering sun and pelting hail. He walked alongside lots of different people. He walked in groups. He walked in pairs. He occasionally walked alone. At night, he took off the backpack and slept, only to start the whole thing again the next day. Over 780 kilometers later, he arrived in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

And, like Forrest Gump, he isn't sure how to stop. Now that Billy is home, he is going through a little bit of a withdrawal process - mentally, emotionally, and physically. "I have this strange feeling when I wake up and I don't go through the routine of bandaging feet and putting on the backpack and walking." His body is quite literally going through a withdrawal period as it tries to adjust to different physical routines, different foods, and the diminished endorphins from the daily trek. Today, we walked for two hours in town just to help him feel like he was still walking. Mentally, there are nights when he wakes up and realizes that he isn't in a strange bed or an albergue. He has been having dreams about sleeping in his backpack. Emotionally, he continues to work through the debrief and reflection process of all of the counseling and coaching and ministry that he did along the way, as well as the emotional impact that others had on him personally.



Billy kept an online blog of his trek. If you haven't been following along, please check it out! So many awesome stories! Go to our website to read more <http://www.drumsforchrist.org/france-to-compostela>

Interested in trekking with us next year? We will be ministering on the Camino again in late May–June 2015. You can do the entire 5+ weeks with us, or join up for a week or two. Let us know if you are interested! We already have several who will be coming along!

DEAR BILLY AND LAURIE,

I will pray for you.
 As God provides, I plan to partner with you by giving
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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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Special thanks to all who sent letters and notes for us. You thought that we were going on a special missionary retreat and would receive the letter there... so did we! But our retreat was cancelled and we were not able to go. BUT WE GOT YOUR LETTERS ANYWAY! So thank you for your encouragement and love!

Sarah recently produced a set of 5 short videos for VBS! Our home church used one video each day as a mission moment. Take a look! And feel free to use them in your church or class!
Day 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NWOin4NUeQ>
Day 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6ob68c8gMo>
Day 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HCdu0UG-44>
Day 4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSenCXPZSnQ>
Day 5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTARIuOJJjE>