



La Luz de Cristo para Perú

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Wins & Celebrations

In the not-so-distant past, our team of national teachers and missionaries was plagued with a terrible disease... the disease of Negativism. Our team meetings were rough and energy-sapping. Two or three-hour weekly meetings based on complaints, pessimism, and a negative outlook on just about everything. We felt battered and beaten when the meetings concluded. Basically, Friday afternoons were torturous for us. Even worse, during the week, individuals would come to our home to have individual one-on-one complaint sessions with us - a time when they would have our undivided attention, unlimited time to have their say, and not have to expose themselves as "the complainer" in a group setting. It was a rough time for us. Have you "been there, done that"? Know the feeling? Good news awaits you! Read on...

Billy and I questioned ourselves about this situation continually. "Is this cultural? Is this normally how meetings go in this culture? Are we doing something that results in this attitude? What can we do to change this?" It was true that part of the problem is the cultural norm for how meetings are conducted and the purpose of weekly meetings in this culture - you meet to express your concerns and to point fingers at the problem. The "boss" has the role of hearing the concerns, getting angry, assessing blame, and punishing the offender or mandating a 'fix' for the problem. Hmm... okay, but that isn't how **we** are going to work as a team. We would have to teach and guide this team into a new understanding of how this was going to work.

Over a LONG period of time, we have been working to change the 'team culture'. We have worked to teach what *team* is, to foster relationships and collaboration, to empower team members to find solutions to problems without necessarily going through the team leader or airing dirty laundry in meetings. One of the biggest changes was in team meeting structure... team meetings would always have 4 components, 1) Community and Relationship time, 2) Spiritual Formation & Prayer Concerns, 3) Administration / Business, and 4) Wins & Celebrations. Although all of these parts have been integral in making our team what it is today, the Wins & Celebrations portion has proved to be the big ticket item! Each week, during our meeting, each person has an opportunity to share their wins & celebrations with the team. Sometimes these things relate to the ministry, and sometimes they relate to per-

sonal lives. But this one agenda item has become the thing that keeps the team alive and thriving... praising God for the wins and celebrations in every week.

No longer do we hate team meetings. WE LOVE THEM!!! They keep us going. They refuel us and propel us forward. Hearing the great things that are happening give us energy to continue the work that has been started here. For a sample of this week's Wins & Celebrations for Kuyay Talpu, enjoy these:

- One family was reunited as a result of the father accepting Christ. Several other people also accepted Christ this week.
- Several of the Kuyay Talpu alumni have gone on to other schools and are reporting high grades. Some are ranked as the number 1 students in their schools! Teachers from other schools are giving high praises to our teachers and are pleased to enroll Kuyay students in their classrooms.
- The students in Patarcocha (3-5 year olds) have been arguing over who "gets to pray" during morning prayers and prayers at lunchtime. They refuse to pray in the morning until all students have arrived so no one is left out. Their parents report that their children are teaching their families how to pray for everything, from food to crops to safety to relationships.
- Two more families started in discipleship classes this week.
- A pair of women was "caught" eavesdropping on children's bible story time this week... they always seemed to show up at the same time to sit and embroider outside the classroom door. The door is now left open for them.
- One woman in the community told one of our teachers, "Billy and Laurie aren't like other people. They live in a rustic house like us, and they have animals like we do. They eat our food. They invite us in to their home. They don't treat us like other people do. They're different."

WIN, WIN, WIN!!!!!! We rarely hear complaints anymore. The team deals with their challenges quietly and with dignity. Today, their biggest focus in everything is on the Wins & Celebrations that God sends our way. They are always there, you just have to choose to look for them and celebrate them. ☺

REAL Southern Living... Our life in rural Peru

The Battle for the Playground in Tinyari



The hard-fought battle for a playground... sounds like a crazy title for a grade school documentary on bullying or something. It has not been easy, but the elementary school in Tinyari finally has the playground that they have been waiting for.

Last year, a team from Texas came to Peru to build two playgrounds - one in the pueblo of San Juan de Iscos and one in Patarcocha. Using recycled, inexpensive or “nearly free” materials, we were able to build two playgrounds. The playground is built of eucalyptus tree “poles” and recycled tires of all sizes. The greatest expense was the slide (x2), as it has to be fabricated by someone in the city, and the hardware (nails, screws, bolts, chains, etc) and paint. Labor was supplied by the team from Texas in partnership with community members.

After these playgrounds were built, the elementary school in Tinyari approached us. We work with this public school each week, teaching bible classes and Kid’s Club. The 60+ students at the school do not have a playground. The TOWN does not have a park or playground. They wanted to know what it would take to build a playground for them. About the same time, we were approached by a team that wanted to come and work in Peru. We proposed this project, in conjunction with a children’s ministry outreach, and were told that they would come in March. We announced this to the elementary school personnel and began to make plans.



Long story short, the team backed out due to funding issues. But we had already made a promise, and we felt we had to keep it. So the call went out to YOU, our supporters, for special help in funding this playground effort. And you responded! The dates were set by the school, the parent-teacher organization was called in, and the community volunteered the labor.

The terrain needed to be leveled and cleaned. We needed to bring in additional soil to fill in low areas and cover large holes. More than 100 eucalyptus tree poles (16 feet in length) had to be brought to the site. Several loads of tires had to be found, loaded, and relocated to the site. And this was just to be ready for the first day of construction. Sadly, the volunteer workers that we had promised to help did not show up. We had the help of 3 men for moving the 15 loads of soil, but no more.



On Monday, Day 1 of construction, three women showed up to help. We needed at least 10 helpers per day. Needless to say, we did not complete the goals for Day 1. We went into Day 2 with a large deficit on work completed. This day brought more workers (8), but they were not productive... they spent the day arguing and complaining about how little the Day 1 people had completed and how difficult their work was since the first day workers had not done their job. Day 3 brought us three more workers. We were WAY behind now, extremely tired, frustrated, and coming to the realization that this playground was NOT going to be finished within the agreed timeline of three days. People complained and said that we should level fines against the volunteers that didn’t come. The school personnel were also frustrated and began sending children home from school to demand that their parents come to help. Children were crying, teachers were angry, I was crying because everyone was so frustrated and lashing out, Billy was beyond frustrated and tired and headed for an angry blowup... it wasn’t a good day. Sometime during that night, Peace came. Days 4 and 5 did not bring us more workers or more help, but Peace reigned. Children were playing on the playground elements that were completed, laughter filled the school, delighted screams were everywhere, teachers were happy to see the children happy. And that was our reward - to see the children so happy. To see children swing for the first time ever. To see children discover monkey-bars and seesaws. It was a hard-fought battle, but it is won.



Did everyone follow through and volunteer and do what they had promised? No. But a few parents and community members built better relationships with us as they worked alongside us during the week. And a few people saw us shed tears of frustration as we worked to provide for their children and their community (our tears were the talk of the town that day). And through that, they learned a little more about us and who we are and how much we love their kids. It was a tough week, but in the end, the kids received their playground and we got to know a few people a lot better.

Go to our Facebook page [“Kuyay Talpuy”](#) to see more pictures of the Tinyari Playground.



Coming events...

The next few months are BUSY for us!!! On top of the day-to-day ministry activities that we always do, we have short-term mission teams and various events occurring in Peru.

Weekly in Kuyay Talpuy:

- Breakfast Club (daily)—feeding the abandoned elderly of Patarcocha
- School / education program (daily) - we have 5 teachers working in two different educational centers... Iscos and Patarcocha
- Kid's Club and Bible School (Wednesdays) - we work with the public school in Tinyari teaching Bible classes and Kid's Club
- Youth group (Mon & Wed pm) - youth come for bible study—Isco
- Home visits (daily) - our Peruvian teachers and missionaries visit homes and have one-on-one bible study with members of the communities.
- Discipleship classes - one of our teachers leads discipleship classes for leaders of home bible studies
- Community bible study / Friday workshop (Fri. evenings) - community members come for bible study, prayer, and fun classes on cooking, sewing, knitting, crocheting, etc.
- Church service (Sunday pm) - Kuyay has a small church plant in Patarcocha

Extra events coming up:

- June 7-16 Remote Mobile Medical Clinic in the jungle... a team will serve the native Ashaninka communities of Pampuriani and San Cristobal
- June 23-30 A medical team will be serving in the pueblo of Tinyari (a Kuyay community!)
- July 1-20 The Mission Society will be training new missionaries from several countries. Our team will serve as hosts for this event again this year.
- July 31-Aug 8 Christ UMC in College Station, Texas will be serving the native Ashaninka village of Shankivironi by building a playground for their school / village and holding a children's ministry outreach.
- Aug 8-16 We will travel back to Texas for Ryan's graduation from Texas A&M Kingsville (Biology), then on to Atlanta for meetings in The Mission Society office.
- Early September - Covenant UMC in Dothan, Alabama will have a medical team on the ground to serve the town of Chongos Bajo.



Praises! The children of Tinyari elementary school have a playground! Thanks to all of you who made that possible!

Praises for the first birth of the season! "Margaret" gave birth to a bouncing baby boy goat, "Mo". (see photo above)

Pray for our Kuyay team and our TMS Peru team... with the added events and short-term teams (see left) comes added stress and juggling of roles so everything is covered and nothing falls through the cracks. Pray that all team members rise to the occasion and joyfully cover all the ministries and responsibilities to make everything run smoothly and glorify God.

Praises and Prayers for our Kuyay Talpuy team (Johana, Rosio, Tania, Milagros, and Luz) and for the communities of Iscos, Patarcocha and Tinyari. I really can't express how incredibly wonderful it is to have such a great team! Our team is working well together, growing in their missionary and ministry abilities, deepening their faith, and working more and more with the people of the three communities. They continue to grow and to hold each other accountable in personal growth and commitment to serve Christ. Pray also for Julia and Elva and Alfonso as they serve our team and their communities via their hospitality, cooking skills, and opening their homes to our projects.

Pray for our Mission Society Peru team (the Ivey family, the McEuen family, the Drum family, the Reeves family and Louise Reimer) as we work to minister to the people of Peru.

Pray for our boys—Ryan and Miles. Ryan is currently in his last two courses before graduation from Texas A&M Kingsville (Biology) and Miles is working in College Station, Texas.

The Drums | HOW TO CONTACT US:

MAILING ADDRESS: LAURIE & BILLY DRUM...APARTADO 013-SERPOST...HUANCAYO, PERU

TELEPHONE: 979.985.5238 (TEXAS PHONE NUMBER—RINGS IN PERU)

EMAIL: BILLY@DRUMSFORCHRIST.ORG OR LAURIE@DRUMSFORCHRIST.ORG

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DEAR BILLY AND LAURIE,

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Thank you so much for your generous gifts and prayers for the communities of Iscos, Patacocha, and Tinyari. This month, we especially thank you for the playground in the elementary school in Tinyari!



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Laurie & Billy Drum

3907 Old Oaks Bryan, Texas 77802 USA

E-mail: billy@drumsforchrist.org
laurie@drumsforchrist.org

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