

The Drum Family

November 2014



Counseling and Caring for others

“When we honestly ask ourselves which persons in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.”

— [Henri J.M. Nouwen](#), *Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life*

Many times over the past several months, we have been faced with care situations in which we felt completely helpless and powerless and weak. Listening to our peers as they pour out their hearts, as we sit with them and hear their stories... honestly, sometimes all I have for them at that moment is my own compassion and a listening ear. I can't fix their situation. I can't cure the poverty that surrounds them daily. I can't stop the human trafficking that they watch occur around them, or the suffering and loss and death that they face routinely in their jobs. I can't stop injustice in the world, and I can't cure broken hearts. But I can listen. And cry. And pray. Most times, I am short on advice or solutions, but I'll hold your hand all day, if that's what it takes.

It has been an extremely difficult part of our jobs, this counseling and care-giving role. The hardest part is in the feeling helpless, the feeling like we just can't do enough to help sometimes. Or that we don't have answers. The truth of the matter is that, on any given day, I would trade places with my peers if it would mean that they didn't have to cry another tear or go through another trial like the last one. I love my job - I really do. And we do it because we love our peers. If we can keep them healthy and strong and thriving, we can help them to help many, many, many others. We can effect change and The Kingdom exponentially by caring for and loving our peers well. And we have a special connection and bond... we are peers. Not supervisors, not bosses, not anything more than friends who are out here in the world doing the same things - serving Him and serving others while living in another culture. Buddies in the trenches together.

In October, we were two of 40 people who were invited to attend a special conference for counselors and member care workers. Although we are both trained counselors, our training was not specific to counseling cross-cultural workers and missionaries in the field. On many occasions, we have been left feeling like we needed a skill boost. This conference was an answer to prayer!

We were in the presence of some of the best counselors and psychologists in the area of member care (missionary care). With 40 students and 15 teachers, we had optimum ratio numbers for an excellent two-week intensive! Each day consisted of 5 hours of teaching / class sessions, two hours of skill and practicum work, and one-on-one personal counseling for another hour or two. Did I mention that it was intense!?! Class topics included everything from the in-depth science part of psychology and brain function and

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emotions, to team dynamics and healthy communities. We had classes on child safety and abuse, trauma and crisis response, helping others deal with anxiety and depression, and balancing our care-giving roles with our personalities and strengths. Cross-cultural implications for member care, grief and loss, addictions, dealing with anger, and conflict resolution. It was a full schedule! To say that my brain was overwhelmed is an understatement!!

During our afternoon skill and practicum time, we worked in small groups of three or four 'student' counselors and one 'teacher' counselor. We did actual counseling during this time while we were supervised, observed and critiqued by others. Think "student teaching" in education or "interning" in medicine. This was really great for us, as this was a piece in our original counseling training that was missing and that we desperately desired! Turns out that Billy is a REALLY good counselor and a "natural" and was pulled aside by the 'top dog' professor. He highly recommended that Billy pursue counseling as a career, and offered him a place in his doctoral program! With a full scholarship! WHAT?!?! Don't get too excited. We aren't going anywhere any time soon! But what an honor... and what a confirmation that this passion that we have for caring for our peers is true and is playing out in Billy's life.

After two weeks of counseling classwork and practicum, we were exhausted, both physically and mentally and emotionally. My biggest issue with this part of my job is being able to let go of the pain and the stress and the emotions after a time of

counseling. I admit, it is very hard for me. Compassion fatigue is always lurking around the corner for me, and I have to make very conscious, intentional efforts to relieve the stress and emotional weight that these sessions bring to me.

Turns out that a big part of that release for me is to spend time in relationship with others and to find ways to laugh and have fun. On the days when we could eat lunch with friends or hang out around the table with peers and laugh and tell stories and jokes and goof off... those were days when it all melted away and my mood was light and all was well. Laughter really is the best medicine! That, and fun friends! Although I am an introvert, this is one of those rare times when I switch over and need to get energy from others.



Speaking of fun friends, we were able to go and visit two of our peers who live in the same country as our conference. We met up with them two days prior to the conference for a time of reconnecting and fun, a time of listening and checking in and making sure they are well. This is a GREAT part of our care-giving role! We went to Ephesus with them (it happens to lie between their home base and the city where our conference was to take place). We had so much fun! One of my absolute favorite things about our time together was the long talks we had, sitting around together at meals, laughing and learning and listening. On part of our journey, we found ourselves at the place where John wrote his letters of the Bible (except for Revelation). We were there at sunset, and our friend pulled out his Bible and read from 1 John as we sat there, sun going down on the mountains and the sea, and it all just seemed so real and so perfect. So quiet and peaceful and perfect. I will treasure that moment with my peers forever.

"Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human."

— Henri J.M. Nouwen

Thank you for your prayers for our time in Turkey and for our conference! It was a really great time for us and a much-needed boost to our skills and spirits!

Pray for Spain!

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 learn how to dig in to Scripture, how to see it come alive, and how to apply it to our lives today. **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 co-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.

It's that time again... Visa time!

The following is an excerpt from Laurie's blog. To read the full story, go to our website at www.drumsforchrist.org and click on **Laurie's Blog** on the left hand side.

Last year, as many of you know, our visas to Spain were approved and granted and affixed to our passports, only to be revoked later the SAME DAY and our passports were confiscated and held for 2 weeks until it could be resolved. This entailed our being held out-of-country without passports, awaiting word as to whether or not we would be able to return to Spain.

You just can't imagine the stress. Completely out of your control. In limbo. Just waiting. Absolutely nothing you can do but wait and hope and pray. Stomach aches, head aches, worry... it's crazy!

So now we are in 'visa time' again. The countdown began 60 days prior to the date of expiration. Exactly 60 days out, you can begin the process of reapplication and renewal. Paperwork in hand, all the t's crossed and i's dotted, copies made, head cocked exactly right... we turned in the files. About a week or two later, we received the first of the gazillion notices requesting more. More proof of financial stability, more proof of insurance coverage, more proof of residence, more proof of educational attendance for Sarah, more proof of invitation to work for the church... more, more, more. Every notice comes as a certified letter. Every one requiring us to go to the post office, wait in lines, sign to receive the notice. Then the trying to read and decipher the legal Spanish. Then a trip to the lawyer to find out exactly what we need to do this time. Over and over again.

They actually sent a request to Sarah (she's 11 years old) asking for proof of financial stability and average income in a bank account! She's eleven! But we complied.

Our visas actually expired last Tuesday. According to the lawyer, we are okay as long as we are still 'in process'. He looked us up in the computer system... looks like Sarah's is doing well and they don't need more paperwork for her. As for us, there is a document still outstanding. It has to come from the Ministry of Justice. It's out of our hands, out of our control, which doesn't make it any easier to deal with.

So we wait. *(This is an added prayer request... please pray for our visas to be finalized and for us to be renewed for another year of service.)*



THIS IS NOT MY ACTUAL PASSPORT! I'm not THAT cool!

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.



Name (PLEASE PRINT) _____

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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!

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All of these updates and more can be found on our website!
www.drumsforchrist.org (Laurie's Blog)