

La Luz de Cristo para Perú

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The Final Goodbyes

After being gone for almost a month, we returned to Peru today to finalize the process of closing our school programs, readying our Peruvian ministry team for their time to strike out on their own in ministry, and finishing our time here. The past month gave me a lot of time to think and process through the transition and I felt ready to come back to Peru and tackle these final days. We have spent years teaching and training and empowering others for this moment - the moment when we would have to leave and they would carry on without us. I felt completely ready... until we actually got here.

Last night was punctuated with messages from our Peruvian teachers as we powered up our Peruvian cell phone and email. "When are you coming back?" "Can't wait to see you!" And my personal favorite, a post on Facebook that read, "My favorite gringos have returned to Peru!!! I'm so excited!"

This morning, we headed to the school in Tinyari for Kid's Club. We were mobbed at the door as 42 school kids and 4 teachers came to greet us, some running and jumping; most threw their arms around us and planted big kisses on our cheeks, the traditional greeting for close friends and family. Some acted like we had been gone for ages, not just weeks. Club was going well, until time to sing. Wouldn't you know it? They had to decide to sing *Jesus Loves Me* - ALWAYS a killer emotionally, and today was no exception. Tears flowed as we thought about the fact that next week is our last time to sing with these cute faces, faces that have changed so much over the past 4 years.

After Kid's Club, we headed to Patarcocha (our former Peruvian hometown) to deliver a couple of things to a couple of friends,

check in, and say hello. Well, again, it is hard to contain the tears when 3, 4, and 5 year olds see you and run and jump into your arms! Even my goat and my pig perked up and got happy when they heard our voices returning to town! We walked to the community dining room where Mama Elva was the designated cook for today. Elva screamed and threw her arms around me, then screamed and ran to Billy. She cried over photos we gave her, sent by my mom from her time visiting. In a few minutes, Mama Victoria shuffled in to get her lunch. Upon seeing me, she began to cry and said, "I didn't think you would come back. I can't believe that my little gringa girl is back!" Tears again. Lots of hugs and kisses.

The above scenario happened over and over again as people came to the dining hall. Hugs, tears, laughter, more tears. It was an emotional day! Our visit to Iscos was no different, as Jullia cried and presented us with the gift she had just finished making for Sarah for Christmas, children screamed "Hermano Billy!", and parents hugged us with much enthusiasm. And each place we went, the community and the parents wanted to know what day we would be free so that we could do something special together before we leave. My calendar for the next few days was quickly filled to overflowing.

I'm not sure if I will survive these coming days. We have been so blessed! Not many can truly call their missionary location "home" like we can. Not many can call their community "family". And not many leave their time of service as loved as we are. We have truly been blessed to have served here!



The Nazareth I know and love...

I've been rereading **THE JOURNEY** by Adam Hamilton as part of my preparation for Christmas this year, and I am once again struck by the similarities of the town I have grown to know and love and the town of Nazareth.

I've been ministering in Patarcocha, Peru for 4½ years. It is not modern, by any means. In fact I only know two people who have real toilets, and our house is not one of those two. Patarcocha is still a village that lives life the way it has for the past several hundred years. People still cook with wood on adobe stoves. Women still wash clothes in the stream. Fields are still plowed by hand with oxen pulling a wooden plow, and the planting is still done completely with the labor of family and neighbors. Sheep are led out to the fields each morning and brought home each night. It is generally a quiet place with a slow lifestyle.

In the research that I am reading about Nazareth, the tiny town of Mary and Joseph was incredibly similar. Nazareth was a town of 100-400 people. My village of Patarcocha has a population of 200. Nazareth had very little in the way of 'modern conveniences'. The people of Nazareth were manual laborers - carpenters, bakers, farmers, potters, shepherds, etc. They made their goods and took them to the nearest big town to sell them in the markets or to the more wealthy 'city people'. If a family from Nazareth was able to provide for a better education for their child, they sent them to Sepphoris. Men or women who wanted a better paying job would travel to Sepphoris to work for people who had need for paid laborers or housekeepers. People from Nazareth could actually stand at the edge of town and see the bigger, better Sepphoris in the distance.

Life in Patarcocha is much the same as in Nazareth. We can see the bigger town of Chupaca just at the base of the mountain, and across the valley lays the large city of Huancayo. People who can manage the funds quickly find a way for their child to attend school in Chupaca. Goods are traded in Chupaca or Huancayo. And the population is changing rapidly in Patarcocha due to the flight of the youth and men, both headed to Lima or Huancayo for the promise of better jobs and a better lifestyle. Patarcocha today is, therefore, a village that is predominantly populated by single or abandoned mothers, children, and abandoned elderly.

I'm particularly struck by the verse in John 1:45-46 in which Nathanael says, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" in response to the news that Jesus had been born. It is a sentiment spoken many times today regarding Patarcocha. When people learn that we live there, they can't catch themselves before the words spill out, "Why?! Why would anyone live in Patarcocha? There's nothing good in Patarcocha. They are country people. Backwards. Quechua Wanca." Of course, there is a scowl on the face that goes with the sentiments. This has always made me sad, that people look at the people of my village with such a low esteem.

Maybe I cannot completely change the view of others toward my village or my people, but I can take every opportunity to say what a great place Patarcocha is. I share with others about the wonderful things I have learned while living here. I work constantly to build up the esteem of the people here and point out to them all the beautiful things about life here and about the people whom I have come to call family. And I know in my heart that God is doing a great work in hearts and lives here. You know what? Something good DID come from Nazareth and something good lives in the people of Patarcocha. These are beautiful people with so much to give to God's kingdom and they are doing it, one step at a time. I think I would have loved Nazareth too, had I lived there more than 2000 years ago.



Is there a 'Nazareth' in your area? Is there a place or a neighborhood or a town that others look down upon? I urge you, during this time of preparation for Christmas, to consider that place and to look for the good in your local 'Nazareth'. You never know what you might find unless you look for it.

Our Life in Transition...

From Peru to the '10/40 Window'

Changes. That is what seems to characterize our life right now. Last month, we moved from the house in Patarcocha and sold all of our belongings. We moved Sarah back to Texas and got her enrolled in school. We made a short foray to the Holy Land to see some of our missionary peers and spend time with a couple of great supporters, friends, and family. Missiles began to fly overhead as we visited Israel, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem and our time there was cut short. This month, we are back in Peru for a couple of weeks as we finalize plans for future ministry here and say goodbyes to dear friends and Peruvian family. Then, the transition back to life in the USA for a few months, a life that seems so far away and strangely foreign to us now. And all the while, we know that we are in a time of preparation and transition - getting ready for our new mission assignment in the 10/40 window.



Lots of changes for us. We have changes in location, country, and culture. Changes in languages. Changes in foods and customs. Changes in mission focus and mission position. We are embarking on a different call, a different plan, and a different 'world' compared to where we have been.

We are headed into a time of debrief and reentry, combating reverse culture shock and fatigue. We are also headed into a time of new training for us, to prepare us for our new assignment; and a time of us teaching and training others, as we work to equip other missionaries for their work and equip churches to better serve in Christ's name.

This is a time of renewal, restructuring, rejuvenation, and reframing. Please pray for us during this time of transition and change.

Praises and Prayers— our transition is going well in terms of us being able to work through the closing down of some ministry venues, paperwork to terminate our residency visas, etc. Prayers for the parts that are still very difficult - the saying goodbyes, the constant letting go, the tears that continue to fall (from us and our Peruvian friends). We are "in between" cultures and lives right now. Please pray for us to have patience with the process and for the transition to go smoothly.

Prayers for our Kuyay Talpuy team (Johana, Rosio, Tania, Milagros, and Luz) and for the communities of Iscos, Patarcocha and Tinyari.

Pray for Sarah as she works through transition. She has enrolled and started school in Texas and was fortunate to get a spot in a dual language program. She is doing well with only a few teary times here and there when she remembers Peru or gets frustrated with culture in Texas.

Pray for our boys—Ryan and Miles. We are so excited to get to spend time with both of them when we return to the States for a time of reconnecting, training, teaching, and (ha ha!) a little rest.

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

Pray for doors to open and for our schedule to miraculously fall into place as we look at our time from January—May 2013... our schedule is rapidly filling with training, travel, speaking engagements... we want to fit every thing and every one into the time! Give us a call or drop us an email if you would like for us to speak to your church or group, or just to have a cup of coffee and visit!

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DEAR BILLY AND LAURIE,

- I will pray for you. Please send me your newsletter by e-mail: _____
- As God provides, I plan to partner with you by giving \$ _____ Per month / quarter / year for _____ years.
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Schedule of Events: December- May

- December 14th** —Last day of classes in Kuyay Talpuy schools in Peru
—Christmas parties and goodbyes
- December 18th** —travel back to Texas for a time of homeland assignment, training, and speaking
- Jan. 6** - Trinity Lutheran Church, Navasota, Texas
- Jan. 8-20** - specialized training in Atlanta and Little Rock
- Jan. 27** - Shiro Presbyterian Church, Shiro, Texas
- Jan. 31-Feb. 16** - travel to Turkey to train TMS missionary leaders in Christian life coaching
- participate in mission leaders conference meetings
- mission field visit to Spain
- Feb. 17** - St. Paul's UMC, Bryan Texas
- Feb. 24** - First UMC Bryan, Texas
- Mar. 5** - A&M UMC, College Station, Texas
- Mar. 17** - Covenant UMC, Dothan, Alabama
- Mar. 18** - teach Perspectives class, Dothan, Alabama
- Mar. 19** - First Baptist, Chipley, Florida
- Mar. 20-24** - President's Gathering, St. Augustine, Florida
- April 7** - Global Outreach Sunday, Christ UMC, College Station, Texas
- Six Tuesdays April 2-May 7** - teach Missions and The Bible course at CUMC
- Six Thursdays April 4-May 9** - teach Global Missions Today course at CUMC
- May 5** - Christ UMC, College Station, Texas
- May 18th** - estimated launch date for new mission location

If you do not see your church or group represented here and you would like for us to visit, please drop us and email or call!!!

SHARE THE LOVE OF **CHRIST** WITH THE PEOPLE OF PERU.

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