



La Luz de Cristo para Perú

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Transition and Memories

As we move through this difficult time of adjustment and transition, we seem to be on a roller coaster of emotions. Sometimes excited about new places and new opportunities and new challenges, sometimes so devastated at the thought of leaving the people we love and work with every day, sometimes paralyzed by the idea of picking up and moving again and starting over. Building new relationships, saying goodbye to old ones. New ministry plans and vision and focus, yet thinking about the ministry here in Peru and praying that the seeds that we planted and fostered will continue to grow and spread. It is just a strange time of 'in-between' worlds.

This time also causes me to do a lot of reminiscing and thinking back to what my original ideas were when we were transitioning to Peru. I never dreamed that I would be living in a primitive adobe house with no toilet! I never dreamed that my big challenges each day would be whether or not we have water, or whether or not the road would be open, or whether or not there would be grass to feed our goats (or that we would even *have* goats). There are good things that I never dreamed about, too. I never dreamed that we would start two school programs, that we would have a community greenhouse or that we would have 30 abandoned elderly that we would feed and take care of. I never dreamed that we would teach Bible classes in the public school or that we would build 4 playgrounds in rural Peru.

Another 'I never dreamed' moment... One day, when I was well into a full-blown case of pneumonia (for the third time in four years), I was trying to take a shower. It was a miracle that we even had water that day! Our shower is located in an outhouse away from the main adobe structure, so I was pretty isolated and alone. During my shower, I began coughing. My coughing spells had gotten progressively worse over the past few days and left me gasping for air and panicked as to whether or not I would be able to take that next breath. This time, my coughing left me doubled over on the floor of the shower, naked and wet and wondering if this was the end. The thought crossed my mind, "When they find me dead on the floor, I hope Billy comes up with a good cover-up story! This is NOT the way I expected to die on the mission field. I always knew that I could die on the field, but I

thought it would be doing something heroic or noble... carrying Bibles into the jungle, or trekking the highest Andes Mountains with locals, or at the hands of an angry anti-Christian mob. I never thought that I would

cough to death naked on the shower floor! This just won't do!!! Oh, Billy - Please come up with a better story before my funeral!" I was totally serious. So serious that I laid there and cried.

I laugh about that story now, but it really wasn't funny then. I spent the next 5 days in the hospital.

There are so many good memories here. Days when we have spent all day sitting in someone's field talking while they harvested a crop or sifted wheat or watched their sheep graze. Memories of sitting and embroidering for hours with community ladies, fingers literally bloody because I am so inept at this art form that even 4 year old Peruvians can do. Remembering how my name sounds when twenty preschoolers squeal it at the top of their lungs and run to hug my knees. Remembering watching a tiny 'disabled' student, Kenyi, as he ran the 50 yard dash for a hundred amazed on-lookers... a miracle in action. His prognosis had been that he would never walk or be 'normal'. Remembering the many meals shared with neighbors, the many bowls of soup brought to my back door, and the many bags of shared harvest when fields were finally ripe and ready.

Memories... how will we ever live through the next couple of months? This transition gets harder by the day.



Our Life in Transition From Peru to ???

So you have a few questions...

Since the last newsletter, many of you have sent us your questions and concerns regarding our transition and the situation of the ministry. We are more than happy to answer your questions! For every one person who is open enough to actually ask the question, there are generally 10+ more of you who were thinking the same thing — so we will publish the questions and answers here in an attempt to keep everyone informed:

Q: For the ministry in Iscos/Patarcocha/Tinyari -What are the best things that can happen once you leave? Who needs to step-up in leadership? There will be a tremendous void when you leave and we want to be praying about what you think needs to happen.

That is a tough question with lots of nuances of answers. Of course, we would love to see the ministries here continue in some way, for people in the communities to step up and take control, and for things to continue to grow. The fact of the matter is that culturally we are fighting an uphill battle and would be fighting it from now till the end of time. There are literally hundreds and hundreds of years of oppression and patron-model here and people just aren't ready to 'be in charge' on their own -- they want a full-time leader (which has been us and the Kuyay teachers/missionaries). They don't feel 'intelligent enough' or empowered enough to step up. So, for a community person to step up and lead--- that would be the dream, but probably not the reality. Don't get me wrong... there are some strong believers that have grown up in the past 4 years!!! And they will continue to be models and live their faith. We talk to them every day! But they aren't culturally in a position to be leaders. This is a problem specific to the Quechua Wanca and the rural areas. We would love to see some of our teachers stay on in some capacity. But the interesting fact is that they WANT TO GO OUT! They want to scatter and do the things they have learned to do (disciple, teach, kids club, etc) in other areas of Peru! So, that is a good thing!!! It is AWESOME that they want to move out into other areas. One of the teachers said in a meeting, "Well, Girls... we couldn't stay in Jerusalem forever. It's time to go to Judea and Samaria now. (reference to Acts 1:8)" A couple of them are looking at teaching positions and being 'tentmakers' like Paul. using teaching as a way to enter the community, starting kids clubs, discipleship, parent's groups, etc. outside of the classroom. We see this as a GREAT move on their part. You know, sometimes things don't work out the way that we dreamed that they would, but God has bigger, better dreams! We trained some really awesome teachers into missionaries... now they are going out. I can't ask for more than that!!! A couple of them are trying to find ways to continue the work here, so we'll see how it all settles out. This is exactly what should happen... Peruvians should be trained up as leaders and take over leading their own ministries to their own people. It's beautiful, actually! We were told the other night by some ladies in the community... "You know, when you first came to Iscos, we (the townspeople) were afraid of you. We tried to run you out of town. We spread rumors about you and tried to get people to boycott you. Then we decided that you were okay and things settled down. Then we decided that we loved you. Then you moved here and we decided that you were one of us. Now you are leaving and people are so sad and worried about what we will do when you are gone." That's a long way from 2009 when they tried to run us out of town and we were so discouraged!!! We came as 'seed planters' - we just wanted to plant seeds of Christ and His love. I, personally, think we succeeded in that goal. God took those seeds and did wonders with them, and He will continue to work them after we are gone... I have to trust in that.

Q: In your newsletter, you said that you would probably move to somewhere in the 10/40 window. What does that mean???

The 10/40 window is really a geographical location... between 10° and 40° north latitude. This location is both biblically and missionally important. An estimated 4.57 billion people live in this area which comprise 8620 different people groups. It is often called The Resistant Belt and holds the majority of the world's Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindu. The greatest quantity of the world's extreme poor live within the 10/40 window.

Some of you have expressed concern when you realized where the 10/40 window is. We understand your concern and thank you for your prayers. Please remember the previous answer regarding Sarah... we are parents first and foremost and our final decision will take into account her safety, health, and education. Right now, we are looking seriously at a location in the far northwestern part of the 10/40 window that seems to be a good fit for those concerns and for the ministry that we hope to do.



Q: How can we pray for you as you look forward at going to 'wherever'???

Pray for clarity as we continue to look at a couple of things/places that The Mission Society has on the table. We are 99% sure of what we will do, but want to stay open to the Holy Spirit and his leading. Right now, the transition time is killing us. It is really hard. We are trying to close things up here, do paperwork about cancelling our visas, packing and selling stuff... all these logistical things are minor compared to the heartbreak daily of seeing people and knowing that we won't see them for much longer. Watching people cry. Sitting with people as they tell us how much we will be missed and how much they have learned. All of these things are beautiful and yet so difficult. We have talked (Billy and I) about how honored and lucky we feel that God has allowed us to SEE and HEAR and FEEL the fruit of our work here - most missionaries never get to see the fruit. I know we don't see it all, and some won't be evident for years to come, if at all, but what we are blessed to see is so amazing! I can't imagine that I could possibly have any more tears to shed... yet, I know that tomorrow will bring more! Transition is not easy... it is a part of growth. God uses change and trials to grow us. We recently heard this quote in a counseling course we are taking, "Change is inevitable, but growth is a choice." It will all be good, eventually! Right now, it's tough. Sarah is the biggest prayer concern -- she is having a tough time with the transition. Her tears come and go. She is excited to go somewhere else, but nervous since Peru is 'home' for her and she really doesn't know anything else. We are trying to ease her transition as best we know how. We also are weighing our "where to go" with her education and safety needs. If it were just Billy and I, we would go anywhere in the world without another thought! But we have an 8 year old in tow, and we must be responsible parents first.... part of stewardship - we are stewards of one of God's children that He entrusted to us on this earth. So her education, health and safety are very important. Physically, Billy and I are carrying our stresses right now in a variety of ways... Billy has some high blood pressure and stomach issues right now and my back issues seem to be extra painful right now. And we are stress eaters, so we need to get that under control! :) We are trying to be super diligent about taking a sabbath each week and hiking, picnicking, etc as a family so we can de-stress and try to have fun and relax.



Praises for an awesome family retreat to the jungle!!! (see page 4)

Praises and Prayers— our transition is going well in terms of us being able to work through the closing down of some ministry venues, selling our household items, etc. Prayers for the parts that are sooo difficult - the saying goodbyes, the constant letting go, the tears that continue to fall (from us and our Peruvian friends).

Prayers for our Kuyay Talpuy team (Johana, Rosio, Tania, Milagros, and Luz) and for the communities of Iscos, Patarcocha and Tinyari. **Pray** for our team as they make some difficult decisions and plans for the future (2013). **Pray** for the communities as we transition and as the time for final goodbyes comes ever closer by the day.

Pray for Sarah as she works through transition. This is particularly difficult for her since she considers Peru to be more 'home' for her than 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 Drum 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... 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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Fish out of water— From the Sierra to the Jungle



What do you get when you take 40 Quechua Wanca people out of the high sierra in the Andes and drive them to the Peruvian jungle? What happens when you take people who are accustomed to sleeping under 4 alpaca blankets in the freezing mountain nights and put them on cots and hammocks under mosquito nets? What happens when you take people from an environment where there is almost no visible insect population to an environment where every square foot holds literally thousands and thousands of ants, spiders, cicadas, beetles, flies, butterflies, moths, and every other creepy crawl you can imagine?

You get Kuyay Talpuy's Family Camp Retreat 2012!



Once a year, Kuyay Talpuy has a 'big hurrah' celebration. In the past, we have held the Kuyay Olympics, we have had friendly competition days, and we have had food fiestas. But this year, we opted for a weekend Christian camp retreat in the jungle. Only a couple of our group had ever left the mountain where they live in Iscos/Patarcocha. On Friday morning, they moms and kids (and two men) loaded a bus and headed over the mountains and down into the jungle - a huge change from what they were used to! Arriving at camp, they were greeted with fresh coconuts (Miguel made quick work of chopping off their tops with his machete and popping a straw in the hole) to refresh their thirst, then assigned to their accommodations for the weekend... cots, hammocks, or tents. Some of the participants quickly began shedding their typical mountain clothing, not accustomed to the heat and humidity of the jungle. However, some habits and customs are hard to break and some mothers stayed in their traditional sweaters and layered skirts for the remainder of the weekend.

By 5:30 or 6 p.m., the jungle cicadas began their song and the Kuyay families went into a tailspin. "What is that?! What is all that loud noise?!" Billy caught cicadas and brought them to the group, which sent many into shrieks and hysteria. After a science lesson about cicadas, all calmed down again and camp continued. We split into camp groups, made up group cheers and group rules, ate dinner together, and headed to the big campfire. We played games and sang Christian campfire songs. We roasted marshmallows (another first for almost everyone). Then we headed off to bed for the night. Sleep did not occur until WAY LATER!!! The first night in the jungle is an exciting time and it proved to be quite difficult to get children settled (moms, too!).



Day two brought more camp fun, bible study times, and many camp games and experiential activities. A trek to the river proved exciting, as all of the children stripped down to nothing and turned the river into a temporary nudist colony! This was culturally shocking to us, but not to the Peruvians who took it all in stride.



The afternoon brought more bonding time, more games, a light jungle rain shower, and delicious meals. We even learned to shoot Ashaninka blow darts! In the evening, the children gathered for a movie night (Max Lucado's movies about Hermie and Flo) while the moms had a special experience with their senses.

Day three brought even more camp fun, bible study times, and jungle experiences. Today's greatest activity was the Tarzan swing and team building experience. Time swinging from trees is not an experience anyone in our rural area has... we have no trees! This was big fun! Later in the day, we walked to the big river and crossed on a boat (another first for all). We picked star fruit and avocados from the trees. Some of the group learned how to make hammocks.



It was a fantastic retreat. Thank you to all of our supporters and friends who made this special weekend possible. The families involved had a wonderful time. They even asked the camp owners if they could come back in December or January and bring others from their families and the community. They all expressed gratitude for the deep study time that they had during the weekend and have asked to have more bible study time using the inductive method that they were taught. Deeper relationships were built. We are really pleased that we took this step and held this retreat this year. Thank you again for making this special time possible!

Who is your neighbor? Who do you minister to? Reflections on ministry and my missionary friend...

We recently had an interesting experience that took me by surprise. We had been noticing the absence of an acquaintance of ours, a woman in her early 40s. She was our only real connection to the owner of our house (her mother is the owner). We usually saw her a couple of times a month, as her family still owns farm land around our house and she came to check on crops. She always came to the back door and we talked. But lately, we hadn't seen her and it became noticeably odd since it is now time to replant the fields and she was not around. So we mentioned it to our neighbor. "Oh. You didn't know? She is in prison." Wow! That was a shocker! Well, not really... we knew that she was in some sort of trouble because we had received warrants and court summons for her on several occasions since our house belongs to the family and is evidently listed as her legal address. We passed these papers on to her when we would see her and she took them and laughed them off, so we weren't too surprised that she was in trouble, but prison was an extreme we hadn't considered! We continued to talk to the neighbor (who is a cousin) and found out that she is in prison for HUMAN TRAFFICKING! That was a shock, for sure! But, small town gossip being what it is, we weren't too ready to believe the first story down the pipeline. However, a couple of weeks later, another family member showed up at our door to sell us tickets to a fundraising dinner to help the family pay for legal fees. The family member was truthful and told us that she was in prison for the same crime that we had heard about before.

This really took me back a bit. How do I feel about knowing that I have been sitting around chatting about life with a human trafficker? I really wasn't sure how to feel about it. I had some astonishment and some anger. I was surprised that we had been so naïve and hadn't seen it, although that isn't something that just pops out in casual conversation. I felt a little violated. I was a little scared that I had been that involved with someone who had so little value for human life and I had allowed her to be close to me or to my daughter. Frankly, the whole thing gave me the heebie-jeebies.

But why, exactly, does this bother me at all? I know for a fact that we have treated, ministered to, and prayed for terrorists and narco-traffickers in our medical campaigns. I have personally translated for battered and abused women and children as they met with the doctor, only to have the husband/father/perpetrator show up later in the day for treatment. We minister to alcoholics and drug addicts. We know, for a fact, that practicing witches have been in our ministry and bible studies and their children have attended our schools. None of that gave me much alarm or caused me to think twice. So why does this human trafficker get under my skin?

I really don't have an answer. I'm still trying to work this out in my own mind and my own heart. I'm seeking God's guidance on this one. And I'm struggling with it. I know that Jesus summed up the whole law in two statements - love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself. And then we have the teachings about 'who is your neighbor', which basically gets summed up into every human on this earth is your neighbor, and that all have sinned and fallen short. So why is this so hard?

My good friend and missionary colleague, Louise Reimer, is working in the women's prison here in Peru. She enters the prison each week and holds Bible study and discipleship groups with women there. Interestingly enough, the human trafficker I'm writing about appeared in her class one day. Just one day. She hasn't been back since that one encounter.

I have so much esteem for my colleague. I'm so glad that God called her to that ministry! In many ways, I feel that she is so much stronger than I am. I'm not sure that I could go into that situation each week. I think God calls each of us according to the gifts he has given us and I guess he knew that I wasn't the one for a prison ministry, but Louise was. She sees past their crimes and their issues and sees real people who need Christ and need a fresh start. She doesn't see murderers and drug dealers and human traffickers. She sees people with names and families. She sees a series of poor choices and bad decisions. And more than anything, she sees possibilities and hope for change and growth and a different future. I'm really proud of my friend and her ministry.



Photo: Laurie & Louise Reimer, missionaries in Peru

More Q&A...



Q: What do the next few months look like? What is your time line on your transition out of Peru? Your time here in the USA? When can we see you? When will you go to your new location?

Our next few months look CRAZY! Right now, we are packing and selling our things and trying to get out of our house in Patarcocha. We don't actually leave Peru until mid-December, but due to some other short travel commitments, we felt that we needed to be out of this house by the first week in November. And, Laurie's mom is here until the 7th, so she is helping us pack and she can help us get some bags back to Texas when she leaves.

In November, we will be doing some other travel. Sarah will be going home to Texas with Laurie's mom and she will stay there until we leave Peru in December. Because of a crazy layover in our flight schedule, we will actually get to be in Texas for Thanksgiving and we will speak in our home church that weekend, but it is only a layover and we will be back in Peru immediately after that.

In December, we will stay with another missionary friend in Huancayo while we work to close down and finalize some things in Peru. The school year ends on December 17th, so that will be the last day for our educational ministries. We will have a big 'end-of-year' celebration and a Christmas party with the ministry. That is also our last day in Peru. We fly out on Dec. 18th and head back to Texas.

We will be in the USA from January—May, speaking in churches, doing some teaching, taking some courses, training, etc. We have some ministry related traveling that we will do, but we will mostly be in Texas meeting with friends, family and supporters and speaking and teaching. We look forward to seeing all of you!!!

In mid-May, we plan to launch to our new mission destination! ☺

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