

SPRING 2014

Perfect freedom is to be a servant of Christ. My pastor made that statement Sunday as he was preaching about joy. Those definitions are the extreme opposites of what the world thinks but what a great joy and privilege to serve Christ by serving others. The opportunities to serve others abound here at home and abroad. Our church continues to grow and we are so thankful for the problem of needing more space. We hit a new record attendance of 327 on Easter Sunday with several accepting Jesus as Savior. We have been checking the land around us for quite a while in order to expand. The 94 acres behind our current location were for sale but out of our budget. We began praying. Pastor Danny felt the Lord would give us the land for half the amount of the asking price. Last month the owner came to him and said, "Here's a one time offer for your church only". He asked him the exact amount we had been praying and offered to finance half if we could raise the first half. We have surpassed our goal and we still have two weeks before we close on the land. We're so excited to be able to give the tiny baptismal pool back to the association and use our own large creek. We are so thankful for God's provision and for answering our prayers.

Romania has been postponed. I am disappointed but as Missionary Gerald Ziemer graciously pointed out, it is obviously not part of God's plan this year since we could not get a team together. The Ziemers promise to visit me here in Chelsea while on their furlough later this year and hopefully we will plan another medical mission team to their area in 2015. Maybe the Lord knew I needed to have June free to recuperate from Peru in May and prepare for Paraguay in early July and Honduras at the end of July. For whatever reason, I'm thankful He is in control and answering our prayers even when the answer is no.

A volcano blowing doesn't seem like answered prayer but I see God's hand leading us in a different direction. Last July when we were in Arequipa, Peru, I promised Pastor Daniel that I would bring a team back to go with him to Ubinas, his new church plant high in the Andes mountains. The Lord gave my Mom, Pastor Todd Smith and me great bargains on winter coats and apparel so when I heard that the volcano erupted, I was sure it would clear before we arrived because we were ready to share our brand-new winter wardrobe. However, when Pastor Daniel went last weekend, he said the ash is still heavy, people are getting sick and we just can't risk it. Yes, we are so disappointed but he has another new church plant on the coast, where they have half a roof and no chairs so we'll have one and one-half days of clinic there. The Woodard's church, El Calvario, has started a mission church in Cocachacra and we will have a clinic there as well. The answer may not always be what we think it should be but He answers prayers for our good and for His glory!

Your prayers are never taken for granted. I am so thankful to have prayer warriors like you serving with me to make a difference in the kingdom. *"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"* (James 5:16b). I'm including the daily prayer list with as many specifics as I know but trust the Lord will put on your heart just what each of us needs. It is hard work to pray and intercede on behalf of others so let me thank you now for all your sacrifices. I can never thank you enough for partnering with me and giving of your time, talents and your treasures. I can't wait to get back and tell you all that He has done on this trip in answer to your prayers.

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