

JUNTOS

November 2003-April 2004

Dear Prayer Team,

Greetings from Lima! It is a cool, sunny, fall day here in the desert. Its a great temperature and reminds me of football season growing up, my favorite time of year! Alas, no football in these parts, at least the football I grew up with, but plenty of soccer, which we are learning to enjoy as well.

Embracing a Hard City

It's been since October since we sent you a physical letter, although many of you receive our monthly updates by email. For those of you who do, some of this will be news you've already received. Do let us know if you'd like to be on our email update list and are not at this time.

We have a number of things to update you on and ask for you to lift up in prayer. In a recent teaching on prayer that I did, combined with our most recent life experience, focused my attention on this verse from **2 Corinthians 1:8ff**:

"For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many."

The trials that come our way, much less severe than the apostle Paul's, but trials nonetheless, are designed to teach us to depend not on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. And as we go through trials, we are to help one another through by prayer.

Our trial began April 1, Thursday night, when, as many of you now know, we were forced to the side of the road on an off ramp by another vehicle containing 4-5 (can't remember exactly how many) gunmen in ski masks and black gloves, all with revolvers. The men poured out of their vehicle the moment we came to a stop, surrounded the car and forced us out, two on my side (driver's) and one on Lori's, the others in front of the car. They told Lori (unbeknownst to me) to get in the back seat, presumably to kidnap her, but then suddenly her gunman told her to sit down on the roadside and climbed in, with the one on my side, and they took off, stealing our vehicle and leaving us in the road.

We are thankful to the Lord in the first place that we reacted as we did, not struggling and inviting gunfire, and that we were left to live another day with each other and our kids. We both knew in the moment, staring down the barrel of a gun, that our lives here on earth might end at any second. Now that some days have passed, we are left with the emotional damage done by these men's sin, a heightened sense of awareness and caution, and some degree of financial loss, though not as bad as it could have been had we not had insurance. All in all, it's the emotional part for which we would ask you to pray. And for wisdom in any practical steps we need to take to protect ourselves in the future.

Kidnapping has become a common occurrence in Lima, and we have been told that the dress of the men suggests that was their goal, if not with us, likely later that night using our car. Since the men have our driver's licenses, the title to the car, and other documentation with our address and names, it has given us cause for concern. Do pray for our protection, the protection of our children, and for the protection of our teammates.

And not only that, but I'd ask you to pray for our brothers and sisters here in the churches, as they face the same risks on a daily basis as we do. The simple fact is that Lima is a sinful, hard city, and what happened to us is a symptom of the sin gripping this city. But it is to Lima that we have been called, to see God, through the power of the gospel, transform this cruel and unjust city into a city for his glory. And Christ can do it. One heart at a time, one church at a time, He WILL do it. And we and our team have some small part to play in that unfolding movement of God. What happened to us the other night, we know, is just a part of that unfolding drama. And you do too, as you help us persevere by praying for us.

Do then continue to pray for the gunmen, for them to be brought to justice AND converted to the gospel. Pray for us to stay in a posture of forgiveness, as that is crucial to what God would want to do through this. Our kids don't know the details of what happened and we don't plan to tell them, but Emmett has expressed a good bit of anger towards the "bad guys who stole our car", so pray that God would shepherd his heart as he, and in their own ways, Anna and Taylor, work through emotions. And of course pray that they'd return our vehicle, as we need it back.

The Ministry Moves Forward

On the ministry front, we've been working away in our three focus areas: leadership training (grace), justice and mercy, and church planting movements. We have seen the Lord's hand helping us, guiding us and opening the way for us. In our first area of focus, that of gospel centered leadership training, since we last communicated our team has had the opportunity to teach 3 conferences, 2 in Cuzco and one in Huaraz, on the topic of the gospel and how our justification relates to our sanctification and our personal

relationships. The photo shows two men practicing explaining the “great exchange”, where we give Christ our sin and he not only takes it, but in return gives us his perfect righteousness. Awesome stuff!!!



We also started this week in Huaycan teaching Evangelism Explosion (EE) to a group of six members of Jesus el Buen Pastor Presbyterian Church. We will be teaching the same course in San Juan de Lurigancho on Thursday nights at Iglesia Emmanuel. Julie and Andrew and I will be each coaching two people and I will be teaching the class. Each week, starting the second week, we will be doing visitation in the neighborhoods presenting the gospel one on one to people the church is in contact with through its ministries. Pray, pray, pray for the Lord to bear fruit through this training, in our own lives and in this local church, both in terms of growth in discipleship as well as new conversions. Pray specifically that the Lord would grant us as trainers, and our students with us, by his Holy Spirit, a deeper and more passionate love for the lost, and an increasing effectiveness and consistency in our personal evangelism. We will be doing this training for a 26-week period, every other week, Tuesday and Thursday nights.

Be praying for the leadership training conference we will do June 11-12 here in Lima on the themes of worship and Christ centered preaching. Pray for God to bring a good group of leaders and for the gospel of grace to bear much fruit among us. Pray for Bill Yarbrough, Scott Roley and Chip Demetri who will be doing the teaching.

On the mercy ministry front, we are kids in Huaycan with Jesus el Buen who are living in a state of practical completed and that it would be used love and mercy to many handicapped through the local church.

Likewise, Julie and Lori are the children of women inmates in a very vulnerable and the opportunity so pray that He continues to lead and mercy a reality.



close to finalizing a home for handicapped Pastor. In the photo are Katterine and Luis, abandonment Pray that this project could be by the Lord in a powerful way to bring his and extremely poor kids in this community,

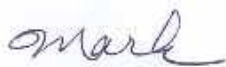
working on a project for a similar home for local prison. We believe these children to be to help them seems to be there from the Lord, open doors to make such a home of gospel

On the church-planting front, we are underway with a church planting partnership in Santa Anita with Pastor Adrian Fernandez and two apprentice church planters, Walter and Mauro. Our team is going to assist with teaching and preaching, provide training of these leaders, and help them start an ESL outreach. Pray for God wrought camaraderie between missionaries and Peruvians and for God to be glorified in the establishment of a healthy, vibrant Reformed local church in this lower middle class community.

Other Items For Prayer and Praise

- For spiritual revival in Lima
- For our marriage and family life
- Lori's grandmother Bebie went to be with the Lord in January. Continue to pray for Lori and her family as they mourn.
- Emmett and Mark attended the West Boca Presbyterian missions conference in Boca Raton, Florida at the end of February. The conference is always a highlight for us, and Dad and son were blessed to have some great time together as well. Thank the Lord with us for the blessing of being able to do something like this. Mark's Dad came down to the conference from his home in Colorado, and that was an extra special blessing too.
- Thank the Lord with us for medical team that came in February from Independent Presbyterian in Memphis. They ministered in 2 churches, 2 church plants and in a women's prison.
- Please pray with us for Sean as he has returned to the States after completing his 2-year term of service with us. We had a tearful goodbye, as he indeed had “become dear to us” and so helpful in the ministry here. Pray for his future and for his adjustment stateside.

Depending on the promises,



Mark for all



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