



NEW LIFE NEWS

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DIOS ES GRANDE Y ES BUENO

By Tabitha Verdick

I went to Peru expecting to find God. Five villages, eight clinics, and 1,200 patients later, God has never been more real in my life. It is hard to believe that so much can happen in only two weeks, but God showed up in powerful ways. To be sure there were bumps along the road designed to keep us slowing down

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and remembering that ultimately God is in control. And He is in control of everything from the Lima government, who confiscated our water systems, to every heartbeat of every patient we saw.

I learned in Peru that God gives us all we need to be exactly where He wants us. And that everything we have been given can be used by God. We were a team of 25 people with skills from an ER doctor to a restaurant waitress. But in the kingdom there is a place and a time for everything. We had two girls on the team who were trained in child evangelism through art. They came on the trip not knowing what they would be doing, but they were able to help out in the local orphanage so the older children could come translate.

It's amazing to me how God orchestrates life, always placing us where He wants us to be. Many members of our team became sick and often



questioned why God had brought them thousands of miles to sit in their room. I'm still processing why God sent me to Peru this summer, and what that means for my life. I learned that despite crossing a continent and rising 13,000 feet into the Andes mountains, God has given me the ability to feel at home anywhere. It makes me wonder if maybe my home will one day be somewhere else. I don't know, but I know God does.

My favorite lesson came through my friend Matilda. She was one of our translators who became a good friend of mine. She was amazing with patients, taking the time to minister to their deeper needs. While we examined eyes and wrote prescriptions, she spoke with them about their homes, lives, spouses, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Matilda taught me that when you speak different languages, tears and smiles can transcend the barrier.

To be sure, simply cradling a baby, holding a hand, or letting an eager

child listen to my heart are eternal acts. I hope they felt the love of God flowing through my heart into theirs. This is the God who not only gave time and money for me to be there for two weeks, but who gave His only Son so that He could be with them forever. Thanks for being a part of this journey with me, and for serving the people of Peru through your gifts, money and prayers. ☺

GROWING UP IN TEKOA

By Jon Verdick

Tekoa was a small town in Judah a few miles south of Bethlehem. Stretching out from the east side of town, toward the Dead Sea, was the “wilderness of Tekoa” (2 Chronicles 20:20). Tekoa most likely means “trumpet clang,” an odd, unimpressive name. Our little town may not be that impressive, still, we have our small town heroes, some of whom have played notable parts in the history of Israel.

Joab wrote a short play, and when he was casting the roles, he chose a “wise woman” to star in this dramatic production, which was to be performed before King David. He knew he could find such a woman in Tekoa. Her masterful performance was the beginning of reconciliation between David and his son Absalom (2 Samuel 14).

David had an elite group of 30 mighty men. One member of that inner circle was Ira, son of Ikkesh, though everyone called him “Ikky.” Not bad for a small town (2 Samuel 23:26 & 1 Chronicles 11:28).

Rehoboam chose Tekoa to be one of his fortified cities when he increased defense spending to keep Judah secure (2 Chronicles 11:6).

One of the greatest moments in our history is recounted in 2 Chronicles 20. What a wonderful victory the Lord gave His people that day. The Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites came to make war against Jehoshaphat. He was told a vast army was on its way from Edom. Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and proclaimed a fast. The people of Judah came together from every town to seek help from the Lord. Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the Lord and said:

“O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you. O our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before

your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?

They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name saying, ‘If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.’ ‘But now here are men from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, whose territory you would not allow Israel to invade when they came from Egypt; so they turned away from them and did not destroy them. See how they are repaying us by coming to drive us out of the possession you gave us as an inheritance. O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.’”

All the men of Judah, their wives and children stood before the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel, son of Zechariah, and he said:

“Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: ‘Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s. Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.’”

Next morning as they set out for the Desert of Tekoa, Jehoshaphat said, “Listen to me, Judah and the people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the Lord your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful.” Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing and praise the Lord for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army saying, “Give thanks to the Lord, for his

love endures forever.” As they began to sing and

praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, and they were defeated. The men of Ammon and Moab fought against the men from Mount Seir, and they helped to destroy one another. The men of Judah looked toward the desert and saw only dead bodies. Jehoshaphat and his men found equipment, clothing and articles of value, which took three days to take away.

Jehoshaphat and all the men of Judah and Jerusalem returned joyfully to Jerusalem. They went to the temple of the Lord with harps, lutes and trumpets. “The fear of God came upon all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard how the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side” (2 Chronicles 20:29-30).

Later, when it was time to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, our people were busy on two different parts of the walls (Nehemiah 3:5 & 7).

So, you see, growing up in Tekoa wasn’t such a bad thing for me (Amos). And though I was but a shepherd, who also took care of sycamore fig trees (Amos 7:14), still I shared in the great tradition and history of Tekoa. One day I was taken by the Lord to be his prophet. I still remember the green pastures and eating the sycamore figs. And perhaps one day you too will enjoy fruit from the new sycamore fig tree planted at New Life. 🍌



LIVING WATER

By Karen Goodhart

When traveling to Africa for the first time, one is more apt to think of hot, dusty scenes of the African Savannah, rather than those containing water and lush, green landscapes. Likewise, we did not realize the significance water would have when we headed for the village of Nakaale in the Nakapiririt district of Karamoja, Uganda.

Nothing makes it feel more like home when traveling thousands of miles than seeing familiar faces. That is exactly what seeing the Okken family did for us. Over the next few weeks we found ourselves daily at their home to visit, play with the kids, or share a meal. A few afternoons a week we went with Pastor Dave on hikes to do Bible studies at surrounding villages, sometimes coming home wet as we were chased by afternoon thunderstorms.

Laura worked at the medical clinic just down the road, spending the day working with the Ugandan and Kenyan staff. She learned a lot about how things are done differently in the clinic due to the limited resources, but she enjoyed doing village clinic visits (to give immunizations and de-worming pills to children), seeing patients with a translator, helping at child birthing clinics, and

working in the lab. She learned how urgently the medical staff is needed in Karamoja when she had to leave with the mission clinic staff in the middle of a Sunday morning to treat and rush a sick child to the closest hospital.

I spent my time with a group of teachers, both professional and those of willing hearts, putting together a VBS program of sorts for local schools in the villages of Alamaca, Okwapon and Tokora. Each program lasted a week and consisted of a brief time of singing English Bible songs, and then breaking up into two class groups to participate in Bible and science lessons. Many of these children came to church in the weeks to follow. When afternoons were free, I also enjoyed going to the Okkens for school with Caleb or going with the group to give Bible lessons to the kids in surrounding villages.

The daily rain, needed for clean drinking wells, as well as the primitive, dirty conditions the Karamajong live in, reminded us of the human need for water. Comparatively, we also witnessed their need for "Living Water," the Word of God. It was exciting to worship at the Nakaale church and witness their

ministry to the surrounding community. One thing for sure, we will never be able to hear this verse (*John 4:13-14*) again without hearing the sweet voices of children saying it in their Ugandan English accents: "Jesus answered, 'Whoever drinks this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water I shall give him will become in him a spring of living water welling up into everlasting life.'" ❧



LET THE NATIONS BE GLAD Book review by Dean Abbot

"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is." So begins John Piper's book *Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions*, an unlikely beginning for a missions' book. These two statements are clarified immediately thereafter, stating, "Missions exist because worship doesn't... Worship, therefore, is the fuel and the goal of missions."

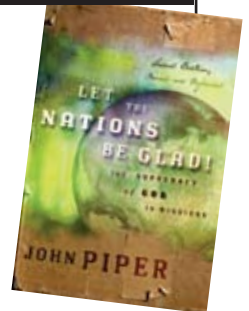
The 240 page book has become one of the most powerful apologetics for missions. Piper writes with a rare, God-centered clarity I have not found anywhere else in modern missions' books. In particular, his reformed perspective is unusual in current missions' circles, and this makes his arguments even more forceful than other missions' books I have read.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of this book is that it is drenched in the Bible. Piper makes his case by letting God speak through His word; the very handy scripture index contains at least 700 scripture entries by my quick count. Part of the power

of his arguments is in the overwhelming support he shows from scripture, sometimes supporting arguments with dozens of verses.

On a personal level, this book (and in particular the first section) created a paradigm shift in how I viewed missions in two ways. First, viewing our objective as bringing God more glory in missions changes our heart from focusing on our actions and duties to the joy that comes from seeing His name honored. Second, Piper's section on prayer changed the way I pray (and not just for missions). In Piper's words, "Until you know that life is war, you cannot know what prayer is for."

Let the Nations Be Glad is a must-read not only for the missions-minded individual, but for anyone who desires to gain insight into how to bring glory to His Name. ❧



“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” —Jesus speaking to Simon Barjona (Peter) Matthew 16:18

TEAM BAJA

by Lydia Goodhart, Joseph Randall and Karie Dimwiddie

“We are the family of God. Yes, we are the family of God, and He’s brought us together to be one in Him, that we might bring light to the world.” This is the chorus of a song frequently sung on Team Baja. I have never felt the close unity found in the family of God more than on my mission trip. When I was first leaving for Mexico, I was a bit apprehensive because I was one of the youngest on the team, and I didn’t speak any Spanish. Within the first few days most of my apprehension faded away as I began to realize that age has little importance in God’s family, and even though Christians in Mexico have an unfamiliar culture and language, we have something in common that overcomes all of that, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our team consisted of 35 people from the ages of 16 to 31. It was wonderful to know that these young Christians were in Mexico for the same reason I was, to serve God. Friendships quickly formed and the work that was being done was not a burden, but a joy. The whole team grew together spiritually during our daily devotion times led by Pastor Crum and occasionally, Joseph Randall.

An unexpected trial came my way when my mini team stayed at our host family’s house. We learned that the father and mother didn’t speak English and their grown daughter, who was gone most of the time, spoke only a little bit. In addition to that, two out of the other three girls on my team didn’t speak any Spanish and only one spoke a very little bit. Most of our conversations ended in polite laughter because we all knew that we didn’t understand each other!

As the two weeks came to a close, everyone on the trip found it hard to part because even though we all had wonderful families to

go home to, we had to leave the rest of our team members behind, another part of the family of God. —Lydia Goodhart

Team Baja was a great experience. We taught English to Mexican children, gave them Gospel tracts, and invited them to Vacation Bible School. We did construction work on two different churches, and we had great team fellowship. We also meditated deeply on the book of James.

Pastor Crum’s devotions on James were powerful. One of the most convicting points he made was on James 1:2-4: “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” I was reminded of how often I don’t count my trials all joy, and I just want to get out of them as soon as possible. Instead, Pastor Crum encouraged us to ask God to keep us in our trials until the trials produce their perfect work in our lives, making us steadfast, perfect, and complete in Christ. This is quite a challenge, but it was a great reminder that what’s best for me is not to have a trial free life, but to be more and more conformed to the image of Christ, at any cost.

We stayed with Mexican host families for a week, which was a challenge because we didn’t speak Spanish very well, and our host family didn’t speak English very well. But we certainly had Christ and His Word in common. The father of the family I stayed with preached one night at his church. I couldn’t understand very much, but I could pick up on some of the Bible verse references. One was from Nehemiah 8:10: “...the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

We have so many more material blessings in America compared to our Mexican brothers and sisters. Yet their strength is

not in the abundance of possessions, i.e., toilet seats, nice homes, or clean water. Their strength seemed to be in the joy of the Lord! May our strength also be in the joy of the Lord, not in the gifts, but in the Giver. —Joseph Randall

Both before and during Team Baja, I prayed that God would shine the love of Christ through me and embolden me so that the gospel would go forth in another nation while I taught English to children, worked on projects at the church plant, and evangelized in different neighborhoods. I asked to be a blessing, but I came home immeasurably blessed and humbled.

Spending evenings with my Mexican host family had a tremendous impact on me. My host mom, a single woman with two daughters, was so thankful, joyful and dependent upon God for everything, even through difficult circumstances. A couple of years ago, heavy winds knocked down her house made of garage doors. She, with help from groups like Team Baja, had been in the process of building a new home that was almost finished. After cold, bucket showers and nights on the concrete floor of the new house, I was humbled to hear my host mom thank the Lord for her home every morning. “Katie, the Lord is the foundation of this beautiful house. I thank God because He lets me live in it!” I cringed as I tried to remember the last time I had specifically thanked God for my beautiful home.

Whenever I was with my host family, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 was so actively demonstrated through my host family, who didn’t have much in the physical sense, but had everything because of Christ. What an important reminder to flee from the distractions of the world and to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. Because of Him, we can rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in every circumstance. —Katie Dimwiddie