

Joseph and Zulema Kotvas, Missionaries to the Deaf in Peru, South America

May 2019 Ministry Update

Dear friends and family,

God's power is real, and I'd just like to testify to his goodness and blessings today. God has done more than we could have imagined in our lives over the past few months of travels. May His name be praised!

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Romans 1:16



God's Grace in Luis's Life

In my last letter, I shared what a blessing our January deaf camp was for our ministry, with five salvation testimonies. In April, we learned more about one of their stories. Among those saved was a young man named Luis

Huaicho. Luis was a "low-verbal" deaf man who traveled around Peru "singing" on the buses, asking for charity for his living expenses.

Luis showed up at Efata just a few weeks before camp, and he was immediately interested in going. The day before camp began, **he came and brought a little plastic bag with assorted change and counted out enough to pay for camp.** He was a coin short, but we left it at that. Luis asked me if the casual clothing he was wearing was all right for camp, and he informed me that he didn't have special clothing for soccer or for swimming. I told him that what he was wearing would be fine; he was welcome to wear his jeans and polo shirt. **He seemed relieved.**

Luis settled in well at camp, and when I asked him how he was doing, he grinned and said he was glad to be there. We learned the next day, however, that Luis wasn't participating in any of the outdoor camp activities. **We realized that he literally didn't have a change of clothes!** As soon as we could get out to the town, Zulema and I went shopping in the market for clothing for Luis. **We bought him a couple of changes of shirts, pants, socks and other necessities for camp,** and gave them to the male camp counselors to give to Luis. That afternoon, **Luis came to me with a smile on his face and tears in his eyes, and grabbed me with a big hug, thanking me so much for his new clothes.** He couldn't get over the fact that we had cared enough to do this for him.

That week, Luis prayed and trusted in Christ as his Savior. He rode the bus back home with a smile on his face, and when he got back, he asked to sleep at my father-in-law's apartment, since he didn't have anywhere to go that night. In the morning, Luis left his backpack with his new clothes at my father-in-law's place and went out... and **he never came back.** We didn't know what happened to him, and we had no way to contact him. **All we could do was pray for him.** After a few weeks, his father, who lived in the mountain city of Cuzco, contacted Efata, looking for Luis, but we had no new information. Photos of Luis

started circulating on social media and on the news, as others tried to locate this deaf young man.

Finally, our worst fears were realized, as in the middle of April **the government identified Luis's body** at a local morgue. He had been there since February 15th! Apparently, he had been mugged and murdered on the unforgiving streets of Lima, possibly the day after he returned from camp. As I heard the news, all I could think of was that I would see Luis again in heaven! That our deaf camp had made an eternal difference. **That Luis's life was changed forever because of the love we showed him, and more to the point, because of God's love.**



Still Going – Because God!

Toward the end of April, we drove down from Indiana to Florida for several meetings in the Fort Myers area. About half an hour from the FL / GA border, our trusty Yukon gave out with a bang in the middle of the interstate! Thankfully, no one

was hurt, but we were stranded at my grandmother's house in North FL for several days. A combination of engine and transmission failure made a repair financially unadvisable. **We couldn't afford the repairs, let alone a new vehicle, but God could!**

Brother Fred Kindhart of our mission board, Macedonia, put me in touch with the Philadelphia Baptist Church in Calhoun, GA, which gave us a 2010 Chrysler Town & Country, free and clear, in great condition! The Pastor had tried to sell it and even give it away at least three times already, to no avail, because **God had our name on it!** The van was just what we needed to get back on the trail, praising His name.

Sometimes I catch myself acting like the children of Israel in the wilderness, always wondering whether God is really going to provide for the need at hand, instead of looking back and recognizing that **He always has, and he always will.** Over these past three months on deputation, **God has been faithful and has provided for need after need – health, housing, vehicle, finances, lodging, and more – in unexpected ways and at unexpected times.** God is good all the time!

Our family is doing well; **pray for JJ as we take him in for an intensive dental surgery on June 25,** and for Zulema; as we enter the hot summer months of June and July & August, **her skin condition that flared up a few months ago seems to be reappearing.** Thankfully, many of the symptoms she was dealing with such as dizziness, numbness and migraines disappeared after her root canal in March. **Thanks, Dr. Lovan!**

Pray for me as I schedule meetings, and as we present the work God has for us in Peru. **We're still going strong, and still serving because God is real, and with God, all things are possible.**



God bless,
Joseph and Zulema Kotvas, JJ and Esther

(904) 335-8563 | joseph@reachandteach.org | www.reachandteach.org

