



# CHRISTMAS IS *LIFE*

Merry Christmas Family,

**2014 years ago ... LOVE** came down to give us **LIFE**. Emmanuel, God with us, a babe wrapped in flesh, knowing that one day ... He would willingly lay down His life, so that we might **KNOW** what it is to truly **LIVE**.



EVERY DAY we thank God for you ... for your love, your prayers, your friendship. Your eternal investments make a way for others to **FIND** what it is to really **LIVE**.

“Only those who throw away their lives for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will ever know what it means to really live.” (Mark 8:35 LB) As we reflect on this Christmas season ... **What makes us fully alive? Or, when do we feel that we are “really living?”** Please ponder the following:

**2014 years later ...** 17 year old Andres and the rest of the interpreters got on the bus with the CERT team. On our way to the first day’s clinic, one by one the interpreters came to the front of the bus to introduce themselves and tell us “why they are here”. The patent answer was to work on my English, serve God and help the people, except for Andres.

**Andres said, “I am here to make money so I can buy my girlfriend a new pair of shoes”.** He then scurried to the back of the bus as everyone laughed. We thought he was having fun with us, but he was dead serious. With the Lord guiding, Andres served as a dental assistant/interpreter with long standing CERT dentist, Dr. Esther Chueng.

As the clinics progressed, Andres and I got closer. He is a really neat guy, deep in thought and quiet reserved. Every day at lunch, as I made sandwiches, Andres would stand at my shoulder as the rest of the team passed through ...taking theirs with them. After a couple days of that, I encouraged other team members to take him along. It was beautiful to watch ... **LOVE** came down and poured **LIFE** to Andres.



ANDRES

**AT THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK, ANDRES ASKED TO SPEAK WITH ME ON THE WAY HOME. HE SAID HIS ORIGINAL PLAN WAS TO ONLY WORK ONE WEEK, BECAUSE HE HAD A JOB NEXT WEEK THAT WOULD PAY MORE MONEY. HE WENT ON TO SAY HE HAD NEVER BEEN A PART OF “ANYTHING LIKE THIS” AND ASKED IF HE COULD HELP US NEXT WEEK TOO. WOW!**

The following Monday on the bus, I asked Andres to tell the team what he had told me. You can imagine how the team embraced him ... **AMAZING LOVE ... it wasn’t just raining ... it was pouring.** At the end of the mission, Andres thanked one of the team members for spending so much time with him. He said no one had ever given him that much mentoring love and attention ... he was most thankful.

**One of our fondest recruiting lines is “mission trips change lives”.** Yes, we GO to touch the physical and preach the gospel, “hoping God may use us to change their lives”, but often it is us who are changed the most. Because of your Kingdom investments with CERT, we witness countless stories like Andres, providing all with a touch of **ABUNDANT LIFE** ... thanks to you!

OVER PLEASE ...



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OVER PLEASE ...

Most of you are familiar with our partnership with Pittsburg State University (PSU). 2015 will be our fifth year/trip with PSU... providing pre-med students with the opportunity to shadow healthcare professionals in remote clinics abroad. One of the students from our trip this past May, much like Andres came for one reason, but she too came to realize that ... Jesus gives us so much more.

PSU student Trista Dugan wants to be a doctor. ***She is doing "all she can" as an undergrad to get into med school.*** One of the main reasons PSU partners with CERT is that we provide their students an opportunity to serve clinically abroad, enhancing their chances of getting in med school.

We have had much correspondence with Trista since our trip to Peru's Andes last May. Not long after the mission, she sent a joyous email telling us that her pastor had asked her to share her experience with the church. She was elated! They sent us a DVD copy of the service, and Trista's testimony. Once again ... the Lord took a little and turned it into abundance when Trista came to realize and testified:



TRISTA DUGAN WITH A NEW FRIEND

**“I wasn't in Peru to do medicine, I was in Peru to grow and share my faith.”**

There is much more “abundance” to Trista's story, as there is to Andres'. Truth of the matter is, when we do a little in His name, He turns our little into His abundance and guides us to find ... what it is to truly live.

**The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. (John 10:10 ESV)**

**2014 years ago ... GOD SENT HIS SON ON A MISSION TRIP; INCLUDING THE CROSS FOR OUR SINS ... SO WE MIGHT LIVE. ONE OF THESE DAYS WE'RE GOING TO SEE THE HANDS THAT TOOK THE NAILS FOR US. AS WE REFLECT ON THIS INCOMPREHENSIBLE TRUTH THIS CHRISTMAS, WHAT WILL WE GIVE TO OUR LORD AND SAVIOR ... WHO GAVE US EVERYTHING?**

Here is a just a few of the endless prayer requests and financial pleas from around the world:

- ◆ A mammography machine was recently donated to CERT. The machine is still in Arizona, we and our Mexico partners are “doing all we can” to make it a part of this country wide outreach. Please pray!
- ◆ \$10,100.00 is needed to purchase sewing machines, materials and supplies for three tailoring centers in Afghanistan. With your help, 24 poor widows and young girls will graduate at years end and receive a sewing machine to help launch their own businesses.
- ◆ \$650 will provide **CHRISTMAS / LIFE** for dozens of children in Peru's most remote Amazon Jungle.
- ◆ \$8 buys and smuggles a Bible into Moldova, from Romania >< How many do we send ... ?

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus name ><  
Merry **CHRIST**mas,

*Bruce*

Bruce Rainwater  
CERT Staff

PS ... Please send your best gift today ... so others will come to **KNOW ... that CHRISTMAS IS LIFE.**

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