

Student Missions

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHAPLAIN'S OFFICE AT SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

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Bolivian Soldiers Give Their Lives to Jesus

By *Victoria Ahles - Rurrenabaque, Bolivia*

So much has happened, and I've learned so much that I could never put it all into words, but let me try to highlight the last four months for you.

In October, we held evangelistic series at the Naval base and the Army base in Rurre. I don't remember the exact number, but it was something like sixty young men gave their lives to Jesus.

Every week, staff and kids from Familia Feliz ride into town to the Army base and lead out in worship. The soldiers look forward to our visits so much that when we don't come, a lot of them later ask where we were.

It's a thrilling experience, really, to see so many young men singing their hearts

out and climbing over one another to get to the front to read Bible verses. The soldiers love the kids, and the kids help the soldiers find verses in their Bibles. I'm always so proud of our kids.

Toward the end of October, six young men chose to commit their lives to the Lord through baptism, and a whole lot more decided they wanted to study to be baptized as well. It's amazing what the Lord can do with young people.

I've been amazed every day at the transforming power of Christ. As I look back on my five months here, I am a very different person than I was when I got here. Slowly, Jesus has taken off my blindfold and I am beginning to see things through

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Life Lessons From Lepers in China

By *Morgan Barrow - China*

Growing up, I thought it would be so nice to not be able to feel pain. I thought it would be great if I didn't feel anything when I banged up my knee or skinned my elbow. But the truth is that if I couldn't feel pain, I would end up hurting myself even more. Pain exists for a reason. Pain lets us know when something is hurt, broken, or in need of care.

Because of leprosy, many of the grandpas and grandmas I've met don't feel much pain, if any at all. This is because one of the main effects of leprosy is the degradation of the nervous system. For many, it has come to the point where they can feel no pain, and because of this, they frequently

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Morgan Barrow shares a moment with one of her friends at leper colony in China.

The Infection

By Adrian Sarli - Moundou, Chad

A 4-year-old boy came into the hospital this week with a horrible infection in his neck. Horrible infections are not too rare in this country, but this kid has a hole in his neck. A hole that you can stick a cotton swab in all the way through to the inside of his mouth. Oh yeah, and he's missing most of the skin on his neck. And did I mention that the infection has spread down his shoulder blade?

Will he live? I don't know. Will he suffer so much that it would be better if he died? I don't know.

He's only 4. You can see the pain in his eyes as the hospital staff changes his dressings. It's bad enough when little kids die here. It's even worse when they suffer like that. It's a cliché, but it's true; there are things worse than death.

Watching it makes me angry. It's not his fault—he's only 4! It's easier to feel OK when a man is dying of lung cancer after years of smoking. I mean, it's still sad, but he lived a decent life and it's sort of his fault. It's a whole different ball game when it's a 4-year-old, though.

What if it was my kid on that table? What if my kid was suffering like that? I'd be looking for who did it to him. At the exact same time, I'd be doing everything for my kid—anything to make him better. I would spend any amount of money and any amount of time. I would fight to see that he got the best care.

So who did it to the kid? In a sense, no one. It was just the result of life in Chad. But in another very real

sense, sin did it. And ultimately, Satan did it.

Sin is horrible. Sin is awful. We say that, but do we really recognize it? That kid is suffering, which is the result of sin. As a human race, we chose Satan. This boy is suffering as a direct result of that choice.

Why not instead say, “Love sinners so much that you hate sin?”

When you tell that lie, when you don't help out that homeless guy by the side of the road, when you selfishly choose your work over those who really need you, you are choosing Satan's way. It may seem harmless, but sin is never harmless. It always leads to death. Always.

“Hate the sin, but love the sinner.” Really? Hate the sin, sure. Love the sinner, sure. But why not instead say, “Love sinners so much that you hate sin?”

Love people so much that you hate what causes their suffering. Love that little boy so much that you hate the sin-filled world that caused his pain. Love the people around you so much that you hate the sin in your life that causes them pain.

Only when you start with love for the sinner—the love that God gives—will you truly hate the sin. You can't start by hating the sin; you'll just hate the sinner, too. You have to start where God does—with love. 🇸🇩

“Guys, it's been the most challenging, difficult year of my life, but it has been the absolute best at the same time. I would never trade my experience here for anything!”

**—Alexis Hartiline
Koror, Palau**



Bolivian Soldiers (CONTINUED)

His eyes. More than myself, I have watched these kids slowly transform from hurt, reserved children with various problems into joyful kids who always ask to pray at meal times. I just want to keep them!!!

I'm learning to live in each day, moment by moment, no longer looking for the next big thing in the future but living in the present as each day comes. That mindset brings so much more peace to my day. I miss home and all the people I love in the States, but I know my place is here, now, in this moment, in this day.

It's a strange thing to starve and not know the extent of your hunger. I didn't know how hungry my soul was before coming here. I found working at summer camp fulfilling. I found going to outreach fulfilling. I found a lot of things fulfilling in the States, but nothing has compared to stepping into a totally different world where nothing is familiar and trying to be a parent and a teacher to 27 awesome kids. 🇧🇴

Leper Life Lessons (CONTINUED)

get large burns and cuts without realizing it. They don't even realize they are hurt until we draw their attention to it and ask if they want baoza (wound care). They usually say no, because it doesn't hurt. They don't feel it. They don't feel any pain. And since they don't feel pain, they don't see their need for help and care.

I was trying to convince one of the grandpas to let me treat a big burn on his arm when it hit me. I'm like that too. Usually, I live my life thinking that I'm just fine on my own. I have food to eat, clothes to wear, and family and friends that love me. That's all I need, right? From the outside, it looks like I don't need help. I don't feel my need for God, because I can't see my true condition. But God shows us our true condition in Revelation 3:17: "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

Just like the lepers who don't feel pain, we are numb to the wretchedness of our hearts. When they don't feel pain, they do not want us to clean and bandage their wounds. And likewise, when we don't see the true condition of our hearts, we won't cast ourselves at the feet of Jesus, asking Him to cleanse us from our sin and selfishness.

But God is waiting, hoping we will come to see our need of Him, hoping we will let Him heal our hearts. All we have to do is ask. 🇧🇴

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