



I am a person who loves seeing parts and pieces work together in a harmony that creates something beautiful. It does not matter whether they are machine parts, ingredients in a meal, colors and brush strokes in a painting, or an orchestra performing. I love recognizing each part and seeing how it's contribution, big or small, is necessary for the end goal to be reached. Over the past few months, the working of the body of Christ has been a theme in my life.

Some people who have not worked within ministry or a Christian community assume that it is easy to work harmoniously in a Christ-centered atmosphere. While in some ways that is true, it is not entirely. I am blessed to be working where everyone is dedicated to serving Christ first and loving everyone as Christ loves us. That being said, there are a variety of personality types, experience, life stages, etc. all trying to work various jobs that in the end should produce on a daily basis a welcoming atmosphere where people feel they can retreat from the battlefield of life and reconnect with their Lord and each other. Combining all these things is not easy. Sin and the desire of Satan to make us fall presents us often with battles that threaten to unravel what Christ is trying to weave into a beautiful blanket.

About mid-February, we really started to feel it. Almost one-by-one. Not everyone wanted to say it out loud or really believe it, but a few braved to say it out loud - spiritual warfare. Different things started happening at camp. Some of them threatened our reputation as a camp. Some of them threatened our work relationships. Some of them threatened our personal and family relationships. The problem with living where you work is that all of these things are practically inseparable.

For me, there was for a week when a big change was announced for my department. Along with it came a breakdown in communication that left me feeling like an outsider. At the same time, some changes happened within my living situation that resulted in more breakdowns of communication. Suddenly, many of the stability blocks I had were taken away. I had little to hold me up. Christ was still there, though. So, I clung to Him and asked for the ability to see as He sees and guidance in how to accomplish resolution. Resolution took courage to have uncomfortable, vulnerable conversations, but because we are all dedicated to living for Christ, forgiveness and resolution occurred. Our body was reconnected and healed. The members of the body of Christ are not guaranteed to never be wounded, but we always have access to the balm that will heal the wounds.

On the positive side, just as I was emotionally healing, my physical body sustained an unexpected and painful breakdown. Something that should have made it feel good ended up turning into an exercise of learning how to put my ribs out. While nothing was broken, I sustained enough tissue damage to limit my mobility and therefore the work I could do. This came at the beginning of our busy season. I'm in charge of the care of 11 horses, doing trail rides, and many things that require the full use of my ribs. Suddenly, at a time when no one really has extra time, I could not do most of my job. In the whole six weeks of my recovery, I was met more by words and actions like, "How can I help?" "Sure, we can do that. No problem." "Don't even try to do that. Let me." "Looks like you're trying to push too much. Let yourself heal." I expected to hear grumbling about extra work, but those words never touched my ears. When one part was weak, the others became stronger in order to protect the wound and let it heal. Not only that, but I was able to grow relationships in ways I never would have if I had been well.

In reflection of these events (and a few more that I don't have space to convey here) I realized that being a functioning member of the body of Christ isn't as straight forward as many pastors make it seem. Usually, sermons on this topic are derived from one of Paul's lists of different gifts and then relate to the different areas where help is needed within that church. It makes me feel like one should simply recognize a gifting God has given them and insert its use into the hole made for it by the church. The truth is we are really multi-functional parts and throughout our life God often changes our function or needs us functioning differently in different facets of our lives. The pulling, stretching, changing, and multi-tasking all keep us dependent on God, his strength, and his wisdom.

By the time you receive this, I will be going through a stretching phase. April 11th-25th I will be with a team of people serving at Monte Blanco. We will be doing some "behind the scenes" work at the camp to help make it a better place. It will be a general short-term work team trip. I am happy for the opportunity to return for a little while. I feel God desires me to function as this type of body part for this trip. A part that can work at what many people can work at. The stretching part for me is knowing God has set me apart for work there that not everyone can do and yet the time for that work has not come. The time is drawing nearer, though. I can feel and see the changes happening in Bolivia and within myself.

When God says, "Now is the time. Go!" I want to be able to get on a plane that day! Will you pray about helping me be able to do that? Right now I'm only at 10% of my monthly needs. You can start giving now or later. I would appreciate knowing if God is putting a specific amount on your heart to give when the time comes. Will you trust that he will make you able to give that amount?

Along with finances, I also need prayer support. Please, join me in prayer for these things specifically:

- Daily renewing of my spirit and focus on Christ, especially as life gets busier this spring and summer
- The work of our hands, mouths, and hearts will be a blessing to everyone we encounter on our trip to Bolivia
- Changes at Monte Blanco (more on those in my next letter)
- Finishing summer camp planning, hiring of summer staff, and acquiring two more horses here at Palomar in California
- Trail rides for outdoor education and retreat groups to run safely and smoothly
- Language learning (I have started online Spanish tutoring with a professional Bolivian tutor!)
- Praising God for every moment, every trial, every blessing, every person

In Christ's love,

Jamie

Contact information:

Email: jmeanderson@gmail.com

Phone: 330-465-5123

Address: PO Box 26, Palomar Mnt., CA 92060