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When the Lord Switches Our Ministry Around

Jeff and Angela Anderson, Arequipa, Peru

This morning in first hour church planning class at Frontier School of the Bible, we heard about unexpected things that come, and sometimes we can have a great plan, and we think that this is what God wants me to do. But then God changes it for something else, and so we need to be sensitive to Him.

COVID also had a big effect, and at first it was a good effect, and you might say, "What? What are you talking about?" Well, when it came down and they said, we're locking this place down for three weeks, my wife and I said, "Nice! We get a little bit of vacation. It was nice. We were enjoying just staying in the house a couple of weeks. A week passed, two weeks passed, we were enjoying it. And then as the third week started it just kind of felt a little bit like, "I'd like to get out of this house I've had enough of my rest."

But the law didn't allow us to go out of our houses. You could only leave the house during certain hours. In fact, the market was only open certain hours of the day. So we all had to go to the market at the same time because the best way to fight COVID is to put everybody in the market at the same time so that COVID doesn't get them. Right? And so that was the policy there in Arequipa.

There were a couple of little stores there where some people lived, but they were all out of food and they weren't allowed to leave their house and go into Arequipa, to the market. There wasn't a market nearby, so they had no way to go out and get more food. If they didn't have a big bag of rice, they didn't have anything. An aunt and grandpa of my wife's gave us a little bit of

money so we decided that we were going to see if we could buy some food and take it to them. We didn't know how this would work out, because the police were arresting people that were outside without official business. They were taking cars and confiscating them. There was a policeman there and a little police station. So, Angela, my wife, went and talked to him and said, "This is what we want to do. How do we go about doing this?" And he said, "Be here tomorrow morning." But that was during curfew.

So, we went to bed. As we're laying down in the bed, my wife looked over at me and said, "I'm scared." I said, "I am too. What's out there?"

But God's calling us to do this." We just felt that we both had peace. That's what God wanted us to do.

It was finally time to go to the market. All the streetlights were off in this market and my wife disappeared out there in the dark somewhere. What's out there, COVID, bad guys?

Who knows? Pretty soon, a guy came with a little pushcart. The little dollie had a sack of potatoes on it.

He said, "Are you the one waiting for potatoes?" And I said, "I guess so." So, we threw it in the back of the pickup. He disappeared, came back a little later and said, "Are you waiting for a bag of lettuce?" And I said, "I guess so." This happened a few times, and the pickup was getting full. So we got in the pickup, and we headed out. Anyways, we got out there. They stopped us. To tell you the truth, I was scared.

This young soldier said, "What are you doing here? Show me your papers." We fumbled around for papers. It was dark, but we found our papers and showed them. Again, they asked, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well, this food that we've got, we're going to take it to Uchumayo to give to people that

can't get to the market. He looked back there and grumbled something, "Get out of here."

And just before we could cross the river to get to the place where we were going to deliver this food, there was a police station there and another police stop.

He said, "What are you doing?" Because the best way to kill COVID is to grouch at it too. And you can't be friendly. You've got to grouch at it. They asked us, "What are you doing here?"

I said, "Well, we got this food and we're going to take it across the river to this association, this little neighborhood over there, and we're going to deliver it to people that can't get to the market.

He said, "Wow, that's a great idea. And we called up one of the guys there that knew a little bit more than other neighbors, and where they lived and who might have some need there.

And he said, "Yeah, I'd be willing to come and help you guys." And so he came, and he took us to about 45 houses.

When we were handing out food, we had the opportunity to share the gospel with people door to door. This was during the time when it was prohibited to leave your house for any reason, when it was prohibited to have a meeting of any kind, we were knocking on doors and sharing the gospel! God takes care of his people when they obey Him when they follow his leading. God can protect. He knows what prayers you need and who needs to be praying for you when they need to pray for you.

So every week we were just going out and giving out food, thinking this is the last time we're going to do this. And every week there was more money.

Another time, my wife had gone and bought some candy bars or crackers or something, and was coming back home because the next day we were going to go out on this distribution. The police stopped her and said, "What are you doing?" "Well, we have a food distribution program. We'll be taking food." "Yeah, but where's your papers?" I think she had forgotten to take a permission slip that day when she was out.

And she's looking around, fumbling around and she said, "I don't know, but I just bought these crackers."

And she was explaining to the lady, and lady said, "How do you pay for this stuff?"

"Well, people give us money and we go buy the stuff."

And she said, "Can I give you some?" So she gave my wife about 50 soles, which at that time was about somewhere between \$15 and \$18, something like that.

The policeman's coworker was there and was kind of curious about what was taking so long with this traffic stop. And so she came over and they started talking and she said that she wanted to help too. Then she pulled out 50 soles also and gave it to us.

Soon we got to thinking, "But you know what? Just down the highway a few miles, there's another place just like this one where they can't get out, and so we were going over there too. And a young police lady said, "I'll help you." So every Saturday morning, she would get in the car with us, and we'd go over there, and then she'd round up all the people. Then she'd give them the old, "okay, one meter of distance between everybody. Put your mask on, up on your face. We got to wash your hands. We have got to be clean. All right, the Andersons are going to share something with you guys" And then we would share the Gospel because they weren't going to leave till they got their potatoes! So here they are. We went through and talked about different stories in the Gospels, in the Old Testament, but always with the Gospel. And they had to hear us whether they wanted to or not because they really wanted that bag of potatoes.

God called us to go to other places where they were a little further away from the city. And we found a contact in a church up in the highlands. And so we went up there, and we got up there, and we went into this place. It's like 14,100 ft There were about four believers that came into this house, and we unloaded the stuff, and we talked to them about what we wanted to do there.

We shared something from the Word with these guys. So with these four believers, we went and sat down, and I opened up in Philippians and we talked about just not being anxious about anything, not being worried, not letting these things of this life bother us, but

going to God in supplication and prayers with Thanksgiving and his peace will work in our hearts.

This went on and on. If someone would have said, "Jeff, why are you going to Peru in January of 2020? Jeff, what are you going to be doing this year in Peru?"

The last thing I would have said is, "I'm going to be carrying potatoes all over the south of Peru to people, because they won't be able to get out of their houses." I never would have thought of that.

And if God would have told me, "Jeff, when you go down to Peru in 2020, you're just going to be taking food to several people that don't have anything, that's going to be your main ministry for eight months," I would have said, "God, think about that again, because that just doesn't sound quite right. That makes no sense to me. I don't understand that. I'm not called to be a grocer. I don't know anything about this stuff. That's not my calling." And yet that's what God used. Later, the people on the top of the high mountain said, "You know what? Before you guys came up here that first visit, we were so discouraged. We were just confused. We were lost. We weren't meeting. We weren't talking, we weren't doing anything. But after you guys came up, you brought us a little bit of food, you also opened the word of God. We haven't missed a Sunday meeting, and we've gone up into the hills sometimes, and it looks like the police are going to be here. We would just go up in that hill over there, and we'd have our meeting up there, but we would meet every week, and you guys really helped us to get back on track as a church."

In another place where we were sharing, giving out this food, several people came up to us afterwards and said, "You know what? If it wasn't for you guys, (well, wasn't really us, it was God) I don't know how we would have made it. We had absolutely nothing."

As you live your life, let God tell you why you're here. Let God give you that purpose. If it changes, let God change it. If the direction that God has for you is the same, stay the same. If it changes, change with God. Not that God changes, but God takes us down

different roads sometimes for His glory, for His honor, so that the name of Christ is lifted up among the nations because only He is worthy of this glory and this honor and everything we have and are.

Jeff and Angela Anderson



ABOUT THE ANDERSONS

Jeff

Jeff is from the U.S. and grew up in a Christian home. He was saved and baptized at a young age when he realized that hell was his future and that only Christ Jesus could save him.

Angela

Angela was born in Peru and raised in a Catholic home. When she finished high school, she was glad to attend a university in the city of Puno, away from the family problems. It was there at the age of 20 that she heard the gospel and was saved and baptized and began sharing the gospel with fellow students.

THEIR GOALS AS TBM MISSIONARIES

The Andersons have a two-fold mission:

1. Take the gospel to villages that don't have it
2. and strengthen the existing churches which have little to no resources. This, of course, includes discipleship and training up men and women to continue the work of the Lord.

