



I believe that a deep desire to preach is from the LORD. He is working in you to do His will." Pastor Coffey wisely counseled. I thank the Lord for leading me to Him and having patient people help me to grow. I mentioned my family, Pastor Coffey, and my youth Pastor Doug Weed. God used circumstances in my life to change my desires to His desires. He continually put in my heart a desire to help others through the proclamation of the gospel. When I could not get away from this desire and I sought the Lord, I received the counsel above from Pastor Coffey.

While I was driving to my church in Yorktown VA from Newport News, God showed me the need for others to know Him in that 20-minute ride. I went to church and a missionary to China presented the ministry. Our church always had missionaries in. He said, "There are over a billion people in China and hardly any missionaries." When he said that, it totally shocked me! I immediately raised my hand and asked, "You mean there are over a billion people in China and hardly any missionaries in China?" He said one word, "Yes." I prayed for God to let me go to the mission field. I saw all of the churches on my way to and from my church and sensed God leading me to foreign missions. I was already in a small Bible College at Foundation Bible College in Ches VA and heard sweet truths of redemption through Christ. I sensed that all the world should know these wonders of Christ. He confirmed His call in His word, while I was at our yearly mission conference. The same verses that convicted me for weeks was preached by Brother Pat Creed from Jeremiah 1. "Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

Jeremiah 1:4-5. I knew I had to go and a few of the missionaries that came through the church told me about a camp and 6 month internship in Peru SA with veteran missionary Austin Gardner. One of the young missionaries there, Aaron Bashore also confirmed to me about the training that would prepare me for the field. I prayed and knew that I needed to go, but it cost about \$6500 for the six months. Where would I get this? I had less than a month to get this money. Some promised to give, but did not. Then Pastor asked me to come down from teaching Junior Church and said, "David, do you still want to go to Peru? Yes, I replied. "Pack your bags! The church is paying for the whole trip!" AMAZING!

Little did Pastor Coffey and the church know how life-changing this trip would be! I learned on the front lines about world missions, discipleship, church planting, language acquisition, culture shock, team building, evangelism in a foreign context and much more. Austin Gardner answered questions and showed me how to do the work. I learned from other veterans there, as well. God still uses him today as a friend and mentor. I may mention that in the next part!

While there, as well, I saw a beautiful young lady come in that worked as a student teacher with children with autism. She had a quiet and strong spirit and really wanted to learn about the LORD. Some of you may have guessed, but this wonderful lady was Beth, who is now my wife!



Pastor Austin Gardner and
other friends that were in
Peru



Beautiful Beth

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