

Many Pieces, One Peace



Bosnia International Servant Trip
2011

June 22

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

You are bringing with you incredible gifts to offer the children of Bosnia. First you bring the love of God. Give it often, give it freely. Then you bring yourself. You are a blessed child of God. Give yourself away daily and you will find that there is more and more of you to give.

You bring peace—

- a state of mutual harmony between people or groups, especially in personal relationships
- cessation of or freedom from any strife or dissension
- a state of tranquility
- untroubled moments
- contentment
- a state or relationship of non-belligerence
- a sense of order
- reconciliation

Give this gift always.

God's love, yourself, peace. These are incredible gifts to offer. Powerful gifts to offer. Essential gifts to offer for the common good of all. Give them to everyone, including yourself when you need them.

Take a moment and ask God to fill you with God's Holy Spirit. May the Spirit empower you to do the work of peace. Amen.

June 23

To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

1 Corinthians 12:8-11

God has gifted you with special abilities. What are those abilities?

As you anticipate the start of camps tomorrow how do you anticipate God using your gifts?

The work of peace isn't easy, but God will give you what you need each day. The Holy Spirit will continually empower you to do this work. Rest when you can in the strength of the Spirit.

Take a moment and thank God for who you are, for you are special, you are gifted to do God's work. When you look in the mirror today, tell yourself - "I am created in the image of God. I am a blessed child of God. I am gifted to do God's work." Amen.

June 24

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12: 12-13

Serb, Croat, Bosniak, Roma, able-bodied, physical and intellectual limitations-- all made in the image of God. All created by God. All loved by God. All one.

All the faces that you will see today/that you have seen today—all made in the image of God. All created by God, All loved by God. All one.

This is what we take into our days, into our journey, into each camp experiences—all made in the image of God, all created by God, all loved by God, all one. Hold this in your heart as you continue into each new day, as you enter into each new experience, as you enter into each new encounter.

Hold in your heart that you are made in the image of God, you are created by God, you are loved by God.

Blessed child of God, may you be strengthened each new day by the love of God for you.

June 25

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

1 Corinthians 12:14-18

Two schools—one camp

Two ethnic groups—one camp

Two teams—one camp.

All loved by God. All gifted in their own way, working together for the peace of the world.

Watch for a special gift in each child today. Point it out to them, nourish it and tell them how it contributes to the peace of the world. Watch for a special gift in a team mate today. Tell that team mate how much you appreciate their special gift and how it contributes to the peace of the world.

If you are reading this as the day is drawing to a close, what special gifts did you see? What hope for the region of Herzegovina does it bring to your heart?

What special gift will/did you bring to the day?

Give thanks to God for the opportunity to use your gift for the peace of the world.

June 26

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2

It is the Sabbath. It is a day to worship, it is a day to rest in the presence of God.

Breathe in counting to four. Breathe out to the count of eight. Repeat breathing in the Spirit, breathing out anxiety. Repeat breathing in more deeply the Spirit, breathing out fatigue. Repeat breathing in even more deeply the Holy Spirit, breathing out everything that is troubling your heart.

Imagine for a moment God's arms wrapped around you, holding you. Feel God's strength, feel God's peace, feel God's love for you.

Settle into God's arms, listen to God's heartbeat, let it be a lull-a-bye for rest.

Blessed child of God, you are God's beloved, we are God's beloved, we are all one in the Spirit.

June 27

If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body.

1 Corinthians 12:19-20

We are many...yet one, one ... yet many.

If there is to be peace in the world, it will take all of us—the many pieces, the many members of this world. It will take all of us believing us to be one. One, with many gifts, talents, faces, smiles, hands, hearts.

If there is to be peace in the world, it will take each heart beating its own beat yet beating in unison with all the other hearts in the world. It will take each of us seeing that the air we just breathed in was once within another.

This trip isn't about any one person, it isn't about you. It is about the world, and for the world. It is **about** Bosnia-Herzegovina, and **for** Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is about the many children learning to be, wanting to be, living to be one country, one nation, in one peace.

Look at the many children today, look at the damage from the war that still surrounds them and offer them hope for a new day, a new peace.

Blessed child of God, breathe in the air that another once held in their own body and share in the oneness that it brings.

June 28

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' ²²On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; ²⁴whereas our more respectable members do not need this.

1 Corinthians 12: 21-24a

Yesterday the South Team was scheduled to be in Foca, and today Srebrenica. Today the North Team is scheduled to be in Trnopolje/ Kozarac. Each one was the site of abuse, torture and rape during the war. A time when folks said to one another, "I have no need of you."

But we know this to be so untrue. We know that we need one another. Look within your team and see how you need one another. Work together, see how you truly do need each other's gifts and talents to do the work that you do. You need the storyteller as much as you need the traveler, you need the athlete as much as you need the musician.

Then take this to the children and to the teachers and to the administrators. Show them how they cannot say to one another, "I have no need of you."

Tell folks today, "I have need of you." Live today, "I have need of you." Listen to how God is telling you today, "I have need of you."

Give thanks to God for those who need you today and for those whom you have needed today.

June 29

But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, ²⁵that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another.

1 Corinthians 12:24b -25

When there is one peace,
There is attention—not contention.
There is protection, not fighting.
There is dialog, not quarreling,
There is harmony, not discord,
There may still be a difference of opinion but it is settled
with and in love.

When there is one peace,
All are fed, and no one hungers
Clean water abounds, and no one thirsts
All are sheltered and no one is left out in the cold
All are free and no one is oppressed
There may still be differences, but all are loved.

When there is one peace, the world is whole, the puzzle is complete.

Make your prayers today prayers for protection, dialog, harmony and love.

June 30

²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

1 Corinthians 12:26

By this point in the trip you have seen the scars and heard stories of suffering. You've been to Kozarac and Foca, Srebrenica and Sarajevo-cities that saw much suffering and still bear the scars. It is hard to not feel some of that suffering yet today.

Today the North team stands on ground that has seen a change in ethnicity due to the war. The South team stands within a city that lost 16 mosques during the war and yet Banja Luka took in an estimated 40,000 Serb refugees from Croatia.

It is an honor to stand on such holy ground. Honor those with whom you come in contact today. Honor them for their courage and strength. Honor them for taking the steps necessary for peace. Honor them for their blessedness.

Rejoice with them in the peace that is present. Rejoice with them in your shared time together. Rejoice in the shared peace.

Give thanks to God for the honor of standing on holy ground, with holy people.

July 1

²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

1 Corinthians 12:27

At one point in its history Jajce was the picture of diversity. Folks from many ethnic groups were residing together. Now it is "two schools under one roof." It is the picture of many pieces, without one peace.

Sipovo struggles to recover economically still. When the economy of any community, country or region suffers it is usually because folks think individually and not as a community, not as a whole. They fail to see the value of holding one another in common.

Today is about community, today is about many pieces, becoming one peace. It is about two communities, striving to become whole again--each one looking for a sense of purpose, a sense of belonging, a sense of renewed trust and support.

Today you are the manifestation of the Spirit of purpose, the Spirit of belonging, the Spirit of trust, the Spirit of support.

Give thanks to God today for the work of the Spirit in and among the folks of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Give thanks to God for the work of all hands, working together for peace.

July 2

²⁸And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

1 Corinthians 12:28 - 31

Your work these past two weeks has been about a “more excellent way”—the way of peace. Your work isn’t done, but will live on in the lives of the children, teachers and administrators you have touched.

You have been a model of

- relationship without belligerence
- reconciliation
- tranquility
- contentment
- a sense of order

Well done, good and faithful servant! You have shown that peace is not simply the absence of war or violence, but a lifestyle where all are accepted, all are gifted, all our necessary and all are loved.

Remember this for yourself as well. God accepts you, God has gifted you, God finds you necessary and most important of all, God loves you.

Enjoy today, enjoy one another, enjoy the blue skies of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Blessed child of God, I thank God for your good and faithful service.

July 3

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Matthew 5:9

You travel home today. You are weary, perhaps a little sad at leaving new friends, and yet excited to return to family and your own bed.

If you were to return to the questions asked of you on June 23 would they have changed? Have you found within yourself special abilities you had not seen within you before? As you anticipate returning home, how do you anticipate God using these new abilities you have found?

You, blessed child of God, are a peacemaker. That role, that identity, that purpose, that mission is yours from now until forever.

May God continue to use your hands, your feet, your eyes, your very being, to bring peace to the nations, peace to your community, peace to your homes.

Thank you for going in peace and serving our Lord.