

Dear Everyone,

Greetings from November grind in San Francisco. The end of the year isn't yet in sight, but everyone is exhausted. The weather is rapidly heating up, but Argentina's academic year doesn't include any holidays from July till Christmas. And anyone who thinks it's just we namby Brits who can't take the pace should come and observe the annual November spike in demand for mental health services. Which might beg some questions about a possible need to tweak the calendar. We don't know if or when that might happen.

People have asked us about what we're doing in Argentina and the impact we're having. We like it when people interact with us, it keeps us on our toes and makes us think. So here is an attempt at an answer.

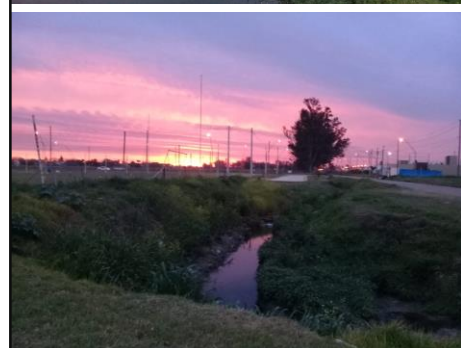
One of the stories we have reflected on is the Old Testament account of Hosea and Gomer, in the book of Hosea. Hosea is told to take Gomer, a promiscuous woman, possibly a prostitute, as his wife and when she is unfaithful to him, to take her back and love her again. The story is used as an analogy to teach about who God is, and the relationship between God and his people. As events unfold we can see how they touch the different actors, like concentric ripples on a pond, first Hosea and Gomer, and then out to the rest of the onlooking community.

Without pushing the analogies to breaking point, we think about our own story in similar ways to Hosea and Gomer. On one level we do what we do because it seems God has put people in our path for us to care for at different times and in different ways just because everyone needs love and care and a few opportunities in this life. But then the next ring out is that we have a basis to talk about what it might mean to say that this person is created in God's image, and to model to the watching community something about what it means to be loved by this God in whose image we are all created.

Here in small-town San Francisco people are definitely watching. Some of them think we're bonkers. Our evangelical neighbour thinks we lower the tone. She's probably right, whether that's a good or bad thing is moot point. But some people are getting it. Our greengrocer always gives us good prices and often comes by with free stuff. One day he said "You know why I give you things? Because I knew *La Flaca* when she was on the street and her life was a disaster and now I see her all clean and walking past my shop on her way to school every evening, and no-one here does the things you're doing". Last Thursday, the head of the municipal nursery where Baby attends sent Hazel a text message saying "You have no idea how much I have learnt from you. Thank you."

Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar, Lord Almighty, my King and my God. Psalm 84.3

Thank you all for continuing to walk with us.



"Many Christians have a good doctrine of redemption but need a better doctrine of creation".
- John Stott.

Love From
Hazel Martin
X

Latin Link



Joni & Daniel

