



# ¿Qué pasa con los Spurlings?

~~EN ROUTE TO PARAGUAY~~

**Hola a nuestros apoyentes (Hello to our supporters),**

We trust that you are enjoying your winter. Here in Paraguay, we don't experience winter, per se. And because we are on the opposite side of the world from you all, we are having the pleasure of experiencing two summers back to back. J is loving the new climate, Karen is not so enthusiastic, and Jeffrey is content to be in one place for more than a year (something he has never experienced).

We are rejoicing at finally having arrived on our mission assignment. We have been working toward this end for the past 10 years. We thank you all for praying us through. Your prayers have been a powerful catalyst in our process. Please continue praying for us as we know how important your role in prayer is to our ability to minister.

In this letter we hope to give you an idea of how the transition has gone and how we are beginning our ministry in Paraguay. There is a huge praise concerning our vehicle fund. There are several prayer requests and our "fun box" continues to give opportunity for you to win a prize from Paraguay.

¡Dios le bendiga! (God bless you!)  
J, Karen and Jeffrey Spurling  
[www.thespurlings.com](http://www.thespurlings.com)

photo above: "El Cabildo", Former Paraguayan Congressional Building

## Toto! We're Not in Kansas Anymore!

*"This is the will of God, your sanctification" –1st Thessalonians 4:3*

by J SPURLING

**K**aren, Jeffrey and I are now living in a different world—culturally.

The culture in Costa Rica was different from the States, but it was not as different when compared with Paraguayan culture. There are 30,000 americans living in Costa Rica. Such being the case, the cultural differences are not quite as extreme as in other parts of the world.

One of the first cultural realizations in Paraguay that I had to deal with were the public utilities. In the States we expect the phone company and the utility

companies to come to our home sometime during the day on which they agreed to come. Nobody expects them to arrive at an exact hour. But we do expect that they will come the day that they scheduled to come.

One of the first weeks in our new home a storm knocked out our phone service. After some amateurish investigation on my part it was discovered that the wires at the house and the utility pole were not installed

"properly." Two weeks passed prior to the phone company making thier appearance for service (in spite



Phone wires leading into the house.



Phone wires connected at the utility pole outside. Where is the cover?

Hey, Jim Gorgans. What do you think?

of my many calls). When I shared my concerns with a new Paraguayan friend, he reminded me that I'm not living in the States anymore. Jose said, "J, things are different here. You can't have the same expectations that you have in the states. You need to start living in Paraguay." A full day passed before I fully accepted the truth of my friend's advice.

Cultural transition is not easy, but it is necessary if you expect to excel in the new culture. One cannot continue to live according to the customs of their own culture as they move into a new culture. Doing this would leave the person ineffective in relating to the people.

Christ was the greatest example of an individual who ministered cross-culturally (Philippians 2). In Ephesians 5 Paul tells us again that Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us. Christ became one of us so that He could effectively minister to us. Paul also writes that we are to do the same, "*Be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you*" (vs.1-2). He goes on later in this chapter to say, "*you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light*" (v.8) Each of us is being called to change our former ways for His new way, from darkness to light. We are all called to cross-cultural transformation.

I've moved from upstate New York, to the metro

area of NYC, to South Carolina, to Florida, to Costa Rica and now to Paraguay (do you see the trend... any further South and I'll be back to where I started). The people in my life at each new location have forced me to change in order to align myself with the new culture. They have served as a constant reminder that I either change or experience ineffectiveness in my relationships. And in each new culture I've listened and adhered to the advice.

Unfortunately, there have been periods in my Christian walk where change has not been as quick to come. The simple reason for that is that I have not always listened to the Lord's voice in my life. His Holy Spirit is a constant friend who advises us to change. We can

embrace His impact on our lives and experience the freedom accompanied with sanctification or we can ignore His gentle guidance and render ourselves ineffective in relationship with God.

As a friend in a journey similar to yours I would like to encourage you to listen and apply the Holy Spirit's advice to your life. And I would like to remind you to pray for us as we continue to make the transition into our new culture. Pray for us "*that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ... that we may make it clear in the way we ought to speak*" (Colossians 4:3-4).



Jose Estafani and J. Jose has been an invaluable friend. He demonstrated time and again that he has the gift of helps.

## Bigger Than the Boogie Man

by KAREN SPURLING

God is bigger than the boogie man.  
 He's bigger than Godzilla  
 and the monsters on T.V.  
 God is bigger than the boogie man  
 And he's watching out for you and me.

As I sit in front of the computer I am reminded of these words that I heard today in a song while I looked at an episode of *Vegietales* with my son Jeffrey. The message behind the song is simply that



we do not have to be afraid because God is always with us.

I must confess that during my first few months here in Paraguay, I have struggled with many fears.

For me, the “boogie man” has been self-doubt as to whether I could effectively learn the language and communicate with the people. Whether I would be accepted by a culture in which I look so different from everyone else. Whether I had what it takes to make a home for my family and I where we basically had to start from scratch as far as cleaning, preparing and furnishing the home. Whether I could cope with the hot weather that everyone kept warning me was only going to get hotter and hotter in the ensuing months. Whether I could have an effective ministry as well as be a good mother to my energetic two and a half year old and his baby sister who is less than a week away from making her appearance in this world... And the list goes on and on.

But what is fear? For me, fear is the absence of trust. For any of us who has been controlled by fear we can testify that fear does not merely grab hold of us but it smothers us as well. It’s all we can see, taste and feel. We lose perspective, we lose confidence, we lose hope and we lose sight of God. But thanks be unto God who in His mercy holds fast to his promise that he will never leave us or forsake us.

At the end of October, I had the opportunity to return to the States for about a week to conduct some business with my friends at the INS office. During this time I was able to meet with my Pastor Dave Pletincks who read me a quote from a book he himself was reading. To paraphrase, the quote was something to the effect that we should do that which makes us come alive because what this world needs are people who are alive. His words made me start thinking about God’s call on my life and how excited I had been to go to Paraguay.

Where did that excitement go? It had been smothered by my fears and doubts. God used my dear Pastor to give me a fresh perspective and a fresh look on my life and ministry in Paraguay. Since my return to Paraguay I have felt more alive and passionate about my call to Paraguay, about the people we are serving and about the work we are doing with them and amongst them.

There are always going to be circumstances in our lives that can cause us to be fearful. But, my prayer is that we would choose to trust instead. Trust in the One who can handle the boogie-man, Godzilla or any other monster that chooses to rear its ugly head in our lives. When we trust, we experience the joy that God wants us to have in our ministry, in our marriages and in our families. I am looking forward to marching forward into the New Year with the One who is “watching out for you and me,” Won’t you join me in marching forward. together?

## Introductions



We would like to introduce to you the family Paredes: Eunice, Pastor Daniel, Paula and Rodrigo. Karen and J will be working alongside the Paredes their first term in Paraguay. Already the Spurlings have realized that God has prepared the way for their ministry in Paraguay by partnering them with this particular couple. Please also be in prayer for the Paredes as you are praying for the Spurlings.

**Fun Box**

This edition of Fun Box is once open to everyone who has not won in the past year. First right answer receives a prize all the way from Paraguay.

which country did Paraguay defeat in the 2006 World Cup in Germany?

e-mail your answer to:  
[TheSpurlings@yahoo.com](mailto:TheSpurlings@yahoo.com)

To view last month's winner go to  
[www.thespurlings.com](http://www.thespurlings.com)

# ¡Gracias, Thank You!



**GENTLEMEN... YOU MAY START YOUR ENGINES!** As you can see from the above photo, we received the monies needed to purchase a vehicle here in Paraguay. Our home church presented us with this check prior to our leaving the States en route to Paraguay. Because of the generosity of so many within our support circle we were able to not only purchase a newer model vehicle (2005 Suzuki Grand Vitara), but we were also able to furnish our home with all the necessities: refrigerator, stove, washer, ceiling fans, beds, tables, chairs... everything needed to begin life in Paraguay.

We would like everyone to know how encouraged we have been by your continued support. We are truly blessed. Thank You!

**p.s. PRAISE THE LORD!**

There continues to be specific needs here in Paraguay to which you could personally or as a church give. Needs such as: Spiritual formation (discipleship materials, scholarship possibilities for Paraguayan theological students, and a special remodeling fund for the Asunción Alliance Church. You can contact us for more information on these opportunities: [thespurlings@yahoo.com](mailto:thespurlings@yahoo.com)

## Pray for us...

1. Pray for our ministry at the Alliance church in Asunción. Pray that we would be lead by the Holy Spirit and that our church would experience growth for the Glory of God.
2. Pray for our continued study and ability in the Spanish language.
3. Pray for the birth of our new daughter... (literally any day).
4. Continue to pray that we would be used to heighten missions awareness in our home church and home district.
4. Pray for unity and wisdom for our team in Paraguay: Bob and Brenda Boston (Field Directors), Forest and Sarah Schell (with their son Caleb).
5. Pray for increased Great Commission giving.

**When God's people pray they are given reason to praise. See [www.thespurlings.com](http://www.thespurlings.com) for praises to prayer.**