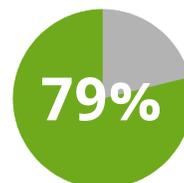


**JOURNALS** POSTED ON DECEMBER 11, 2017

## A NEW HOPE: Jedis and Light Sabers: Baja Journey Part I



DAVID & JOYCE REED



SUPPORT PLEDGED



IBEROAMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

## **La Esperanza (Hope)**

As I stepped into Advent this past week, I realized this time last year I was writing to each of you about my impending surgery. The doctors didn't know if I had Crohn's Disease or cancer. And I invited you to journey with me, to be my faith community, as I sought hope and the steadfast love of our Lord to keep me grounded. After my surgery, I discovered that I did not have Crohn's Disease or cancer, and that I was basically a medical mystery. (Though my husband has always claimed I'm a mystery!)

I have spent most of 2017 seeking footholds and fingerholds as my immune system reboots. And last month, as we traveled to Southern Baja, Mexico, I asked for your prayers because it was my first international trip since my diagnosis in March 2016. I'm excited to report that I did remarkably well! Yes, I did get tired. Yes, I did have a couple days when my system felt "off." But overall, I was able to find foods that adhered to my diet, and I never got horribly ill. I firmly believe this is due to the covering of prayer that surrounded me. I have renewed hope that I can begin to travel again. There will be risks, but God keeps nudging me to take them! So, I am planning to travel with David to Bolivia at the end of February 2018. Keep those prayers coming!

## **Jedi Warriors Needed**

In the Star Wars movie saga, Jedi Knights are the guardians of peace and justice in the Republic against the Galactic Empire. Our world needs guardians of peace and justice, especially in Southern Baja, as we stand up against oppression today. La Paz was a relatively quiet

and safe place to live during the 17 years we ministered there. In the past year, however, activity between the drug cartels has escalated and violence has increased. From May to November 2017 there have been 400 homicides with many innocent lives caught in the crossfire.

While worshiping on Sunday, November 12, with Crossroads Christian Fellowship, our friend Oscar shared the tragic news that one of his former colleagues had been kidnapped and murdered the week before. He was distressed and grief-stricken during the prayer time. But his vulnerability created a space for all of us to be vulnerable. Prayer deepened. And we began to pray a covering over La Paz, a peace that could only come from God.

Many of you ask, “How can we pray for you and your ministry?” This is a specific request: pray that peace would reign in La Paz once more, and that men and women of faith would be fearless agents of God’s peace. Isaiah 52:7 reminds us, “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim **peace**, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns!”



David with pastors in Cabo San Lucas

## **Wielders of Light and Truth**

While in Southern Baja, David gathered with two different groups of pastors—one with leaders in La Paz and the other with leaders in Cabo San Lucas. He heard the joyous news that three missions (new church starts) that had started in 2015 were now organized as official churches! And four more missions have started as well. The Baptist Convention of Southern Baja has always excelled at starting churches. During our tenure, thirteen churches organized! Their desire is to continue to grow and mature God’s Kingdom people from Guerrero

Negro, the border with Northern Baja, all the way to Cabo San Lucas at the tip of the Baja Peninsula.

To support them in this venture, David explored how our new role in on-line theological education can equip future leaders, as well as how we can return and facilitate workshops in Spiritual Renewal. We want to see them deepen their relationship with God, and deepen in their understanding of Scripture so that they can be effective and compassionate shepherds.

The weapon of the Jedi Warrior is a light saber, a laser sword with a plasma blade, powered by a kyber crystal. In Ephesians 6:17-18 says, "Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."

The Bible, God's Holy Scripture, is our only offensive weapon. We are not to use it indiscriminately or without compassion, but instead, to share God's Word in a way that creates sacred space for authentic and abundant life to unfold. This is our goal as we disciple pastors and leaders in Latin America.