



# Faith in Action

## How One Family's Obedient Steps Are Transforming Lives

When their son Luke was born in 2019, Anna and her husband, Paul, felt led by the Lord to sponsor a child through Compassion who would help to show their son how people lived in other parts of the world.

As Luke grew up in South Dakota, the family regularly wrote to their sponsored child, Matthew, in the Dominican Republic.

Matthew lived in a poor neighborhood in the eastern side of the country, in an area where access to healthcare and quality education was limited and many children struggled with chronic malnutrition.

As Anna and Paul learned more about Matthew, their hearts were moved to do more for his community and the church that cared for him and his family. When an opportunity was presented to invest in other programs at his church, Anna says it was an easy decision.

"It was a no-brainer," says Anna. "We felt so grateful we could help more people in the community."

The couple began by providing funding for the Survival program that cares for mothers and babies through their first year of life. This was the program that connected Matthew's family to Compassion when his mother was pregnant with him. In fact, it was through the Survival program that Matthew's mother came to Christ, with her husband following in her footsteps soon after. Anna and Paul also committed to funding a project that would provide housing for vulnerable families in the community.

Shortly after they funded these needs, the couple was invited to visit the Dominican Republic in person, and they were thrilled they would have the opportunity to introduce their son, Luke, to their sponsored child, Matthew.

Anna and Paul knew the boys meeting would be special to their family, but they had no idea about the bigger picture of all that God intended for their trip.

The family met Matthew and his dad at the child development center, where they were able to spend an afternoon in the classroom with him, getting to know him and what his life was like.

“Matthew’s faith ... was inspiring,” says Anna. “[We heard] about how sweet and kind he was to others, about his love for Jesus and his love for prayer and God’s Word.”

Although Matthew’s father was clearly proud of his son, it was obvious that something was weighing heavily on his heart. He shared with Anna and Paul about his older daughter who had been bullied at school and who had recently fallen away from her faith.

**During their conversation, Anna learned that Matthew’s sister was discouraged, but that she had a dream of becoming a flight attendant someday.**

After hearing about Matthew’s sister, Anna immediately knew that God had brought their family to the Dominican Republic for more than just meeting Matthew and visiting the initiatives they had funded. Anna had been a flight attendant herself, and her heart filled with love for Matthew’s sister and a word of encouragement for her.

Later that day at Matthew’s home, Anna had an opportunity to speak with Matthew’s sister. She shared with her about how she had become a flight attendant for Emirates airline even though many told her it was impossible. She encouraged Matthew’s sister with Matthew 19:26, reminding her that all things are possible with God. Anna also shared about how God’s voice is the only one that really matters.

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*Anna and Paul’s story is just one of many we could share about the amazing individuals who have stepped out in faith with generous hearts to fund programs that bless our participants around the world. We are so thankful for their willingness to invest their personal resources to join God in what he is doing for these precious children, and we pray the Lord blesses them beyond measure!*

“The Holy Spirit was 100% present and there,” says Anna. “A few of us had a good cry, and even though I didn’t understand the language our translator and his sister were talking in, I could tell she was really moved.”

Lacey, a Compassion staff member from the U.S., was on the trip with the family, and present for the conversation with Matthew’s sister.

**Lacey says, “We all marveled that God loved this young woman so much that he literally sent a former flight attendant from the United States to her house to tell her that God loved her and she could accomplish her dreams, because with God, all things are possible.”**

Anna adds, “We are very thankful that we were given the opportunity to go on this trip. And, as I reflect, I realize that God’s plan is far, far, far greater than mine could ever be. That trip was actually for a woman who loves God and was a flight attendant to go talk to a girl who wants to be a flight attendant but has fallen away from him. Nothing is by coincidence. I know that was a conversation from God to remind her that he loves her, cares about her and wants her!”



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