



Holden Newsletter

We hope the following highlights will help you find and read what interests you.

Main Topics

Main Points

Prayer Requests/Praises

Dear Friend, Encourager, Partner-in-Mission,

Thursday, Nov 27, tomorrow, is Thanksgiving - but it doesn't seem like it! The Ecuadorians do not celebrate this U.S. holiday! The only turkeys we've seen are live ones in the street markets! Darrell and I plan to "celebrate" on Saturday, by taking a ride in the "telferico" (tram) up the mountain range where we will be able to see Quito from more than 13,000 ft! Once at the top we plan to either hike or go by horseback through the countryside. We plan to spend time praying, enjoying nature, enjoying each other, and remembering our son, Aric. **We thank the Lord that we will be able to spend the day in the countryside, away from the city.**

This month the average daily temperature has been between 55 and 75 degrees and partly cloudy or sunny during the day. At night it has gotten as "cold" as 40 degrees. **This is "winter" here in Ecuador!** We know that this is difficult for some of our friends in Wisconsin to hear because it's already been below zero there! But we did miss seeing the leaves change colors in the autumn and will miss seeing the snow fall at Christmas. We must admit, though, that we do not miss the cold or shoveling snow! **We thank the Lord that we are living in such a temperate climate.**

Monday, November 3, we threw a surprise birthday party for Mami Carmen, 58, (the head of our Ecuadorian family with whom we live). The grandchildren in the family (15, 10, 6, and 2) helped us make homemade decorations plus Darrell and I managed to find some birthday balloons and streamers. We also purchased 2 chocolate cakes and soda, and the oldest daughter, Verito, brought snacks for the 15 guests who came to help celebrate. We also purchased some small, practical gifts and asked the rest of the family to present them to Carmen (they did not have the money to buy gifts for their Mom/Grandma). When Carmen entered the room, the look on her face was unforgettable! After opening her gifts, she tearfully explained that she had never had a surprise birthday party! **We thank God for the opportunity to share in such a special occasion with our family!**

Tuesday, November 4, Darrell attended the first Emergency Management (EM) Meeting. HCJB/RB has recently obtained a basic format of EM procedures from the Red Cross which they wanted to share with all the staff. **In January, Darrell will begin teaching** the other staff in these procedures, expanding upon the outline which they obtained. Because we will still be in school, he will only be preparing training sessions for **the English-speaking staff** and will be giving short presentations at the monthly staff meetings until our classes are done in the spring. **We thank God for the opportunity for Darrell to begin his ministry early.**

Thursday, November 12, we met for a special lunch with Denise Love, the Director of Missionary Personnel (and our boss). She wanted to check in with us personally, to see how we are doing in concern with adapting to the climate, culture, customs, language, and where we are in our walk through our journey with grieving the loss of our son, Aric. We assured her that we are doing well (thanks be to God) although Thanksgiving and Christmas will be difficult for us (his birthday is Dec 26. We always talked on the phone or visited with him during this time.) **Please pray that we will find a special way to remember our son this holiday season.**

We also registered with the U.S. Embassy in Quito, Ecuador via the internet. We now receive alerts and warnings, directly to our computer, concerning the country of Ecuador. We thank the Lord for this service which will help Darrell be more aware of the ever-changing safety issues in this country.

Friday, November 14, we visited our former language school (from 2011) and spent a couple of hours talking (in Spanish) with the director and office worker from the school. We were not able to visit our former professors at the school, but will return to do so in the future. One of them lives in the same area (Carcelen) where we are presently living so we will probably just visit her at her house. The other one lives in Conocoto who we will visit later this month at her house. **Please pray for Monica, the director, who is struggling to keep her school operating** with all the new laws the government has recently imposed. She is raising her daughter as a single-parent because her husband is dying of liver cancer and other health complications and is living with relatives in the U.S.

Sunday, November 16, we were thrilled to be able to put up a Christmas tree (artificial) and decorate our living space with the Christmas things which our family is so graciously sharing with us. It now feels a little more like "winter" because they taped white fiber to the bottoms of the windows to make it look like snow! We've never been in Ecuador during this time of the year before and did not know what to expect. We are thrilled to see dozens of booths with lights and decorations being sold on the streets! **We thank the Lord that we should have no problem finding what we need, next year, for Christmas, when we have our own apartment.**

Some new friends, Jenn and Will, announced that they will be having their first baby! Jenn is the assistant director of our present language school (a N. American missionary who is married to an Ecuadorian husband). They had been waiting upon the Lord for this pregnancy for 3 years. Also, for the past 3 years, they have been trying to obtain a VISA for Will (VISAs are extremely difficult for Ecuadorians to obtain). **Praise God they are also celebrating because the government has issued Will a VISA and now they can travel to the U.S. so that Jenn's parents can meet her husband for the first time!**

Thursday, November 20, we visited with Scott and Jody, the missionary couple from Washington, with whom we went to missionary training in Colorado in 2012. They are temporarily living in the home of another missionary couple who is on furlough in the U.S. for a couple of months. We shared a delicious meal together and spent the evening comparing our experiences living in Ecuador. **They are looking for their own apartment and gave us a lead for one in their neighborhood.** We need to be living closer to the HCJB/RB facility because of the nature of Darrell's work which will be in concern with emergencies. We now have several options for renting apartments but only one of them, so far, is located near HCJB/RB. **Please pray that we will find an apartment that is sufficient in size, clean, safe, affordable, and near the places where we need to do ministry, shop, etc.**

Saturday, November 22, we visited one of our former professors, Nelly, at her home in Conocoto. We spent some time at her home and then spent the rest of the evening in Historical Olde Towne Quito walking the streets, listening to live music, shopping in the little shops, eating empanadas, and enjoying each other's company talking in Spanish. **Please pray for her family's financial situation.** Due to new government laws, her husband has been unemployed for the past 3 ½ years. Also, she owes a large amount of money for her education and because she was not able to pass a mandatory exam, by 2016, she may no longer be able to teach.

Sunday, November 23, we visited Iglesia La Vin~a (The Vineyard Church) in central Quito. We are presently attending the Nazarene church in Carcelen while we attend language school. When we re-locate, we will be able to attend our former church (La Vin~a) which has moved and is now near HCJB/RB. **We thank the Lord that we were finally able to re-unite with the Pastor and his family and our other church family!**

Also, this day, we took the 1 ½ hour bus ride to Conocoto, to visit, again, with our friend Monica and her family. After sharing food and much conversation, she and her parents helped to load up the rest of our belongings they had been storing at their house for the past 3 years, and drove us in their pick-up truck back to Carcelen. Usually Monica and her mother ride in the back of the pick-up and her father and the two of us ride in the cab. This time, I, Sondra, rode in the back. There is a vehicle seat bolted to the floor of the bed of the truck, just behind the rear window of the cab. Riding backwards in the back of a pick-up for 1½ hours is one thing, but riding backwards up and down steep mountains and around sharp winding curves is something else! Not sure I'll be volunteering to do that again anytime soon! It is amazing that Ecuadorian families do this all the time and often with as many as 10 people piled in the back! **We are praising God that I did not get "car-sick"!**

Wednesday and Thursday, November 26 and 27, Darrell will be spending time with Professor Adreana, reviewing and practicing Spanish conversation. We Praise God that she is able to give 8 hours of her time, one-on-one, with Darrell during our semester break!

Friday, November 28, Darrell will be attending his first Men's Breakfast, with fellow HCJB/RB male missionaries. Poor Darrell, who now lives with mostly females, and who attends class with mostly females, needs some "guy time"! We thought that Darrell was speaking little Spanish because he was struggling with the language, but it turns out he just needs to talk about "guy stuff" with some "guys"! When we spent the evening with Nelly and her husband, Nelly and I noticed that once Darrell started talking with Mario, he just didn't stop! **We thank the Lord that He has reminded us that there are also "culture differences" between the sexes!**

This Thanksgiving, we have a slightly different perspective on what we are thankful for. We'd like to share a few of our blessings with you:

- A home to share with a wonderful Ecuadorian family.
- Economic healthcare and a wonderful natural physician.
- Sufficient clothes, food, and personal needs.
- An electric wash machine and dry sunny days to dry our clothes outside.
- Access to email, Skype, and a scanner in our home.
- A safe neighborhood and a protecting God.
- Faithful financial supporters and prayer partners.

You will soon be receiving our End-Of-Year Newsletter ! As you remember the many blessings the Lord has given you this Thanksgiving and you prepare for the Christmas Season, **we ask that you consider remembering us with your prayers and your year-end financial gifts!**

Also, some of you have asked if there is anything that we need here in Ecuador. The following are items that we could use and that we can not find to purchase here or which are extremely expensive. Tina Bush, has offered to collect these items and see to it that they are shipped to us.. If you would like to consider donating some or any of the following items, please contact her at tinabush@wctc.net to make arrangements for how to get these items to her for shipment. She will be collecting them from now, through at least, the end of the year.

- **School supplies:** small yellow legal pads, 3x3 sticky notes, non-spiral pocket-size notepads, packs of college-ruled loose-leaf paper.
- **Food items:** Old Bay Seasoning, Peppermint Lifesaver candies, horehound lozenges (found at Goodwill stores), natural/organic honey and/or lemon candies or lozenges.
- **Personal items:** two 2015 Christian wall calendars with ample space to write notes in the daily squares, writing journals.
- **Health items:** Packets of Emergen-C powder electrolyte/energy drink (various flavors found at the Stevens Point Co-op).
- **Cash:** for our friends to be able to purchase for us some specific personal items not mentioned in the list above.
- **Other items:** Hand-written or typed cards/notes/prayers! Photos of you and/or your family! Your Skype address! Wisconsin postcards to share with our Ecuadorian friends!

May you and yours have a warm and blessed Thanksgiving with your family, friends, and/or church family!

Praying that you will be able to share your Thanksgiving meal and other blessings with someone less fortunate in your community this year!

