



Holden Newsletter - Apr 2017

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,

DARRELL'S SURPRISE 'TRIP'

When one thinks of a 'surprise trip' it usually does not involve hospitals and surgery but that is how we spent Sondra's 64th birthday on Sunday, April 2. On Darrell's way to church, he miss-stepped a very steep ramp leading into our church parking lot and fell, rolling into the busy street, dislocating the 2nd joint on his little finger. At first everyone thought it was broken because the bone had broken through the skin but praise God it wasn't. A church staff person nervously drove Darrell to the hospital, while Darrell, being the paramedic that he is, spent most of that journey trying to calm down the driver. We spent several hours in the emergency unit waiting for Darrell's breakfast to digest so they could prepare him for surgery. Surprisingly, the total bill for all of his care, including the E.R., two doctors, two trauma surgeons, x-rays, medications and tests, and the anesthesiologist was only \$1,088.35! (Makes you wonder what's wrong with the healthcare system in the U.S. doesn't it?) Since then he has been taking natural supplements for tendons and ligaments and doing exercises, on his own, at home, to aid in the healing process. This has resulted in him not needing any rehabilitation at the hospital. **We praise God for the wisdom of our natural medicine doctor in the U.S. and the expertise of the Quito surgeons!**

OUR 1ST MAIL DELIVERY FROM THE U.S.

After living here more than 2½ years we finally received some postal mail from the U.S.! Cheryl, the gal from Community Church in Wisconsin, who had visited us last September, sent us a book which took about three months before it ended up in our mailbox at Reach Beyond. Also, Julie, a friend who now lives in Kentucky, sent me a birthday card which took about three weeks to arrive. More and more in this modern world, regular mail is becoming a rare commodity. For us, receiving cards and gifts in the mailbox is pure joy. **It is a blessing to receive something tangible from the hands of those who pray, love, and care for us.**

EXPERIENCING 'THE UNEXPECTED' IN SHELL

In April, Darrell made another 3-day visit to Shell, near the Amazon jungle. He spent one full day in round-trip travel, another day helping out with some maintenance projects and the other day meeting with Dan Whitehead, the security coordinator for Alas de Socorro (Wings of Rescue/Mission Aviation Fellowship) at the hanger in Shell. **The majority of his trip went as planned with good results, but the ride to Shell was harrowing because of a rather irresponsible taxi driver.** Darrell, who has driven firetrucks, ambulances, and even a race car, arrived in Shell with sweaty palms and ruffled nerves because his driver was straddling over double yellow lines and screeching around the blind corners of mountainous roads at very high speeds. He reported this to Reach Beyond, who promptly spoke with the taxi company owner so that future missionaries will not have to travel in fear. **Also, we recently became aware that the Alas de Socorro airplane, in which we were hoping to fly in the future, had crashed and was found near a jungle river.** The Ecuadorian pilot, who is a good friend of several RB missionaries, miraculously survived the crash with serious injuries and is still recovering. One of the passengers had broken bones. **We praise God for sparing the pilot's life and ask that you pray for wisdom, clarity and justice in regard to the investigation.**

SURPRISE VISIT FROM PATRICIA

Early one morning, Patricia, Wendy's mother, showed up in Carcelen telephoning me to come meet her at the bus stop. (Ecuadorian culture often does not entail advance notice for visits.) I was sleeping when I received the call so I quickly showered and took a brisk walk across our neighborhood to meet her. She had come to visit me because she was not able to do so on my birthday (on April 2nd when Darrell and I were at the hospital because of dislocating his finger.) We spent the entire morning sharing breakfast and chatting about the things of life.

We've known some of Patricia's history since 2005. She had been with a man, who was Wendy and David's father, and never married him but lived with him. For years he brutally abused her which resulted in her being mentally, emotionally, and physically incapable of caring for Wendy and David. After he left, she took her children to the Henry Davis Foundation (formerly Houses of Happiness) where we later became their sponsors. During our visit this month I discovered that Patricia's own mother had died when she was three years old. Her father took her and her three brothers to the same children's home (where, years later, she took her own children Wendy and David) because he could not care for them alone.



Darrell, and Sondra with former sponsor children (David and Wendy) and mother (Patricia) in their home in 2011

All of her adult life Patricia has lived in Pisuli, high up a mountain-side in northern Quito, in a small cement and wood 4-room dirt-floor home with no running water, no inside toilet, and a light bulb which hangs from the ceiling in each room. Wendy and her brother try to help their mother with some of the basic necessities when they can yet they have their own families to feed. In 2011 we bought Patricia an LP gas-tank so she could cook indoors on the refurbished stove her brother gave her. But the tank was recently stolen, along with her machetes, and all other items of any value she had. So she's back to cooking outside over an open fire in the cold, damp, windy air on the mountainside where she lives. Her only income is from the hand-made beaded jewelry she occasionally sells when she travels into Quito.

This day, this short, pudgy, little woman, with a huge heart (and no real income) spent bus fare just to come visit me to tell me "Feliz Cumplea~os (Happy Birthday) and to enjoy the morning with me.

She brought me fresh eggs, a necklace she made by hand, a few recycled items which she probably found in the trash, and one of the only two blankets she owns. (She recently has been crocheting blankets to help keep herself warm through this abnormally long, damp, cold winter). She told me she had washed it for me because of the volcanic dust in her dirt-floor home; this meant she washed it by hand, with what little soap she has, used most of her rain barrel water and hung it on a line to dry for days! My heart wanted to tell her that this gift was not necessary because I have plenty of blankets and she, with only the two that she made, lives in a home that is in a much colder climate than in Quito. But in this culture, I must not reject the gift, and accept it with much gratitude. The blanket is yellow with various other bright colors - and I adore it! I told her how it reminds me of my mother, who once crocheted a blanket for her and Dad's bed. **I explained that I know how much time it takes to make something like this and how I deeply appreciated her kind gesture. Her response was to tell me once again how grateful she was that Darrell and I looked after her "little Wendy and David" when they were in the children's home. She then proceeded to give me her traditional huge bear hug lifting my feet completely off the ground!**

This day, Patricia also shared with me that she has breast cancer. With no real income, no insurance, and no way to pay for the treatments, I reminded her that God is a 'God of the impossible' and that I would contact our prayer partners to pray for her. We are praying that she will be eligible for the services of a social worker and perhaps receive her care in one of the government "free" hospitals. **Then later this month, Wendy shared with us that her mother may also lose her home.** The dusty little village of Pisuli is presently putting in paved roads . In the process of surveying the land the local municipality discovered that Patricia does not own the land her house sits on and it belongs to the municipality. She is what they call a "squatter" in that her house was built on public land. They have told her that she needs \$1,200 to pay back-taxes on the land AND make improvements to her home or they will confiscate the home and property. **Our hearts are heavy and we ask you to pray that we will be able to give this burden to the Lord and to listen to His voice for a solution.**

ONE DAY RETREAT IN PAPALLACTA

Sondra plus over 20 Reach Beyond missionaries and employees loaded up a mini-bus with overnight bags and yummy fresh tropical fruit for a 1-day spiritual retreat in Papallacta. Escaping the city of Quito (with it's almost 3 million people) is always a healthy practice for us. **It's such a joy to be worshipping our Lord and studying His Word with fellow believers in God's magnificent creation!**

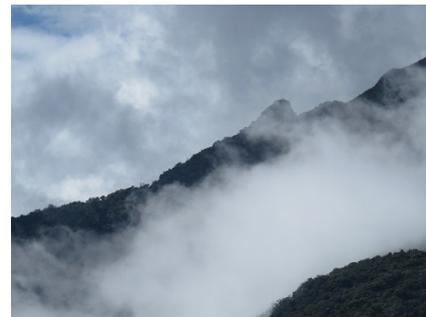




We shared movies and popcorn, fireplace s'mores, nature hikes, and natural volcanic thermal baths.



Amazing majestic views as we traveled through the rural areas outside of Quito.



From bear crossings, to passing through clouds, to landslides - there's often excitement in travel here.

LEADERSHIP AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT SEMINAR FOR COASTAL PASTORS

Darrell was recently invited by Oscar Aguirre, Director of Pan de Vida ministry, to be one of the instructors to speak at a special seminar in Calacali, Ecuador for 18 pastors and 4 church leaders from the coast. Here, they would be blessed with three amazing days of worship, prayer, instruction, resource materials, and encouragement to help them work through the physical and emotional losses of last year's devastating 7.8 earthquake. The entire event (transportation, seminar, housing and meals) was made possible by Samaritan's Purse. On Wednesday, April 26 we left early morning, by car, traveling with two of Pan de Vida's staff. The driver, Jefferson, had translated all of Darrell's written materials into Spanish to be used in the manual for the seminar attendees. **Elisabet (also bi-lingual)- -> assisted us throughout the day as needed. While talking with her on our way to the seminar, we delightfully discovered that **she had been one of the translators during our 2007 E3 Partners medical mission trip in Ecuador. What an amazing Lord to reunite us 10 years later!****





The 3-day seminar was held at 'The Grace Center' building at a facility named 'The Refuge' which it truly became for these 22 pastors/leaders who had suffered great physical, financial, and emotional loss.

Here, in God's creation, they would begin to heal as they soaked in the beauty of the surroundings, worshiped, prayed and learned together.





Each pastor/leader was given a thermal jacket and cap, six Christian books on leadership topics, and a manual filled with resources including photos, histories, and contact info of the attendees and 35 pages of crisis information which Darrell provided.

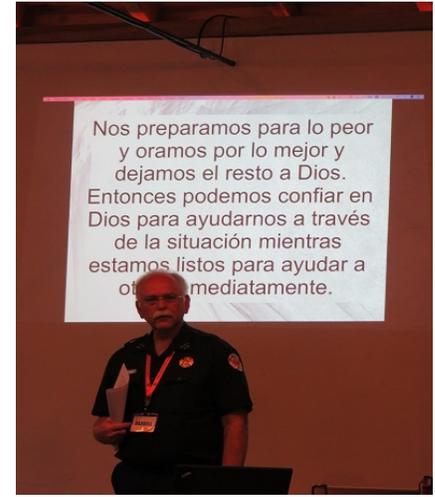


Darrell and Oscar, Director of < - - - Pan de Vida



< - - - (Translation) "Surviving A Crisis"

(Translation) - - - >
 "We prepare for the worst, pray for the best, and leave the rest to God. We must trust God to help us through our own situation so we can then be ready to immediately help others."



Before his presentation Darrell asked the pastors/leaders to write down what they did before, during, and immediately after the April 7.8 earthquake. Struggling, as he re-called difficult memories, this particular pastor wrote:
 Before: "we were without preparation"
 During: "we panicked"

After the presentation, the pastors were able to recall more things from the past and formulate new ideas and plans for the future.





We thank the Lord for this blessed opportunity to learn together, share meals, encourage one another and build bonds!

Pastor Pablo and Darrell - - >



< - - - Sondra, Darrell, Pastor Pablo, Oscar (on right), Pan de Vida Staff, and 22 pastors and church leaders from the coastal area of Ecuador celebrating the blessings of the first day of the seminar.



We praise God for His faithfulness to provide the resources needed for these faithful servants of Christ who are now greatly encouraged and filled with hope for the future.

Upon our return to Quito, that evening, Oscar invited us to join a team that will be coming to Ecuador from the U.S. this summer to help rebuild houses for people living on the coast. We will be meeting with him soon to discuss the details and to determine if this mission trip can be worked into our schedule before we leave for HMA at the end of this summer. Please be praying for God's will for us in regard to this awesome opportunity.

Also, at the end of the seminar day, Sondra was able to interview one of the pastors and will be writing a feature article for Oscar's report to Samaritan's Purse. We also will be sharing this article with our own newsletter recipients. Pray that Sondra writes what the Lord desires to be shared.

**We thank God for your prayers
and your financial support
as He continues to lead and use us
in the things He has planned
for the people of Ecuador!**

Darrell and Sondra Holden

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