

**Dear Friend, Encourager, Partner-in-Mission,**

**Psalm 68:10**

**"...your people settled in it, and from your bounty, God, you provided for the poor."**

**When the Soul Is "Unsettled" and "Poor"**

**Upon the return from our recent trip to the U.S. our minds, emotions, and bodies were lacking in peace and rest.** I, Sondra, took two weeks off from ministry to deal with things at home and catch up on much needed sleep. Journal-writing, which is my safeguard, the way I process the world around me, was also something I was way behind in. I was beginning to feel overwhelmed and unsure that I would ever recover from this trip. But, long before, the Lord knew how badly I would need time to "catch up" and "re-new." **One week after our return, He provided a ladies retreat at the HCJB guesthouse in Papallacta!**

The thought of spending three days away from the city and the fast-paced routine of our current lives was heavenly. But, to be honest, most of the ladies retreats I've attended have been jam-packed with activities. The last thing I needed now was more activity! Yet, much to my surprise, the ladies had planned only one small event for the entire weekend! **Wow, almost three whole days to do whatever I want?** No "to-do" lists? Appointments? Meetings? Clocks? Phones? Nor computers? Pinch me! I must be dreaming! Within seconds I made a short mental note: SLEEP, EAT, JOURNAL, READ, PRAY, ENJOY GOD'S CREATION – CHECK!



Papallacta is a three-hour trip from the city which takes us through the Andes mountain range to an elevation above 10,000 ft. At the the guesthouse, there is a fireplace, outdoor hot-tub, gigantic picture-windows with views of the mountains, and plenty of good food and fellowship!



**Although the entire weekend was amazing, my three favorite things were:** 1) watching the Christian movie "War-Room" in Spanish, and understanding it!, 2) falling asleep, Saturday night, to the sound of live Ecuadorian music playing at a fiesta in the valley below, and 3) taking photos during a three-hour hike through the mountains near a rushing river and waterfalls, while singing praise songs with two female companions!



The sound of moving water always soothes me, but the joy of being able to praise God, through song, in the midst of His creation, replenished my lack. My Lord knew exactly what I needed and there was now a “richness” and a “settling” in my soul!



### **His Provision is Abundant!**

The two things I've had the most trouble “letting go” of, since our move to Ecuador, are Christmas decorations and books. Christmas is my favorite holiday, so, to have 15 large tubs filled with decorations is “normal”. Now...we have three. Most of the items are lightweight and small, so we hope to bring them to Ecuador. The books are more of a challenge. They are bulky and heavy. To get them here would entail packing a few each time a traveler comes this way. At that rate, it could take years to get them here (and I'm 62!). Many books, especially good Christian books are a part of our lives because of the growth that occurs from reading them. But, we've concluded that we may have to face the anguish of getting rid of most of our “paper-treasures.”

Then one day, in October, there was an e-mail sent to all Reach Beyond missionaries, from a Baptist mission organization in Quito. They had a collection of over 1,000 books from missionaries who have left the field- - - and they were FREE for anyone who could use them! I dropped my agenda for the day and began reading through the list. Although the e-mail had been out for a couple of days, 53 of the 60 books we wanted were still available!

Then a disturbing thought came to mind, - - - “How will we get them home? We don't have a car and transporting them by taxi is risky (books are extremely expensive here and those written in English are even more highly desired by those who could take them and sell them). Could we manage to get the boxes of books on a crowded city bus?...hmm, let's not even go there! Just as we were beginning to re-think our decision to accept this many books, the Lord nudged us to ask for even more! He reminded us that many Ecuadorians who are trying to learn English could now have access to Christian books written in English. There were also Christian books written in Spanish, and for our indigenous friends, there was a New Testament written in Quichua! So, we had a discussion with the caretaker of the books and she offered to have someone transport them to our home! Not only would free books be delivered to our doorstep but some of the ones we found are the very same “favorite” books we have in Wisconsin, plus, many that we've always wanted to own but never found them at a price we could afford!

Just when we thought everything was settled, the Lord prompted us to send the list of remaining books to our pastor and his wife. We thought maybe they would want a few, but, much to our surprise, they want ALL of them! They will use some for the library at the seminary and the language school and they will make the others available to the seminary students, language school students, and families of our church to have as their own! Plus, they have their own means for transporting them! Not only is the Lord providing for us, but He is also providing for others - ABUNDANTLY!

### **Preparing for “The Seemingly Impossible”**

We are now totally prepared, at home, with our own emergency supplies and notifications to our

**emergency contacts in the U.S. as we prepare for the possible catastrophic explosion of the Cotopaxi volcano.**

In August, one of the world's largest (19,000 ft) and most dangerous volcanoes, located 35 miles south of Quito, "woke up" for the first time in 70 years. Authorities have not ruled out a future major explosion. The Ecuadorian government has set aside \$500 million toward evacuation expenditures and re-building the infrastructure if needed. There are 350,000 people who live in the "red zone." If an evacuation is necessary, most of those people, because of geographic restrictions and projected lava flows and mudslides, will need to "go north" into Quito which already has approximately three million residents.



**Darrell, is providing educational sessions to the staff and missionaries of Reach Beyond, HCJB Radio-Ecuador, the Alliance Academy International, the Nate Saint Memorial School (near the Amazon jungle) and other community organizations and businesses in the area.** These organizations are instructed to provide medical supplies, health-protection items, food, water, etc. to their missionaries and staff should the disaster occur during their ministry hours or work-day and prevent them from leaving those facilities. Darrell has impressed upon the families that "the more prepared we are at home, the less we will be concerned about our own families and the more quickly we will be able to respond to others".

**The dilemma lies in the fact that there are a significant number of nationals and non-nationals alike, who either do not have the proper knowledge base or do not have the resources to prepare for the upcoming possible catastrophe.** It is unfortunate that so many either do not take seriously the information provided "to prepare", or that they simply do not have the financial ability to purchase the items needed (or the items are not available because of increased demand).

**One such family dealing with this issue, is our own "Ecuadorian family" with whom we lived for six months while in language school.** This family of four adults and four children does not have sufficient income nor a male figure in the home to guide and protect them. These women and children are our sisters and brothers in Christ. They are active in the church, generous with what little they have, and have opened the door of their home not only for us but for many others.

**After several days of un-settledness, we prayed, and determined that we must do something.** First, we went to their home and shared with them all the recent updates on preparedness. Then, we told them that we had made a list of the necessary emergency items and that we would take their oldest daughter, Verito, shopping that weekend to buy everything the family would need.

On the day that we shopped, Verito shared with Sondra that she was grateful but embarrassed that they could not do this for themselves. Not being able to provide for your own family in Ecuador's "shame-based" culture is much more of an embarrassment than it might be for someone in the U.S. We explained that we understood this; yet **the reason we were doing this is because this is what brothers and sisters in Christ do - - - they help take care of their spiritual families"**! Verito, with tears in her eyes said, "I have been watching and listening to the news everyday, knowing what we are supposed to do but thinking, 'all can we do is trust God', and now, he has sent his angels of protection to help us". Sondra then responded, "Do you really think we could sleep comfortably at night knowing that your family does not have the resources you need, while we have the resources to help you? **Isn't this what the love of Christ is all about - - - to be available to help as God enables?"** Verito's big smile revealed her agreement and a long embrace and tears followed.

We know that we've had a lot of unexpected expenses lately and that our budget has tightened a lot. But to worry about whether we'll have enough in the future seems irrelevant when, in the present, there is an opportunity to share Christ's love by sharing a burden with another. **In His Word, Jesus says that we are not to worry about tomorrow and that anything is possible with Christ. If our Ecuadorian family trusts God enough to be generous, then why shouldn't we?**

**PLEASE PRAY:**

- \* For all the families locally and internationally who need to see the love of Christ within you and for God to show you how can share that love this Thanksgiving.
- \* For the families of Ecuador who do not have the resources to help keep their loved ones safe.
- \* For the Reach Beyond missionaries and their families so that they may be moved to "reach beyond" their resources, trusting God, to reach out to help others in preparation for the potential upcoming volcanic disaster.



**Darrell and Sondra Holden**

**Serving with Ripe For Harvest - Partnering with Reach Beyond**



**in Ecuador, South America**



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