

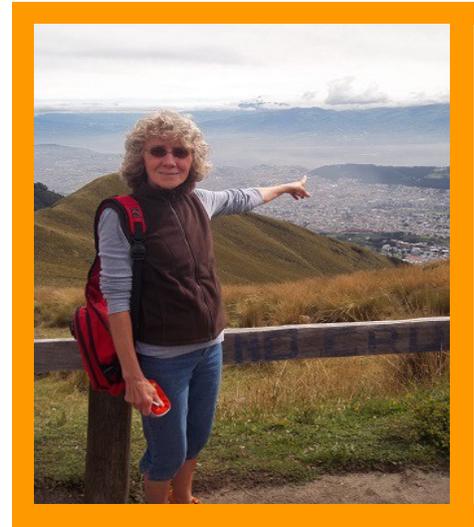
Dear Friend, Encourager, Partner-in-Mission,

Retired? - - - Really?

On April 2, Sondra turned 62, officially “retired” and is now collecting Social Security! Really? - - - Retired from what?

It's been almost 10 years since she's worked outside the home but that certainly doesn't mean that she hasn't been working! We're not just talking about 10 years of the full-time job of domestic work and 5 years of helping to completely renovate our home so we could sell it, but she's also been working between 15-25 hours/wk preparing for and maintaining our jobs on the mission field. And on June 1, she'll be starting several part-time positions on the mission field.

In God's plan there is no such thing as “retirement”. Daily, He places golden opportunities before us to be a part of His plan and WORK here on earth. Retired? - - - Don't really think so! Not as long as there are mountains to climb and God's work to do!



Our hike to the top of Pinchincha – An active volcano @ 15,000+ ft! - - - >

Holy (Good) Friday Ecuadorian Style

In the U.S. we have the scrumptious tradition of the Friday night fish-fry with all the fixings. Here, in Ecuador, we have “fanesca”! *Because the making and eating of fanesca is considered a highly social or family activity, we and several language students and professors spent the entire morning in the kitchen participating in this special Ecuadorian tradition. Fanesca is a dish traditionally prepared and eaten by households and communities in Ecuador only during Holy Week. It is a rich stew-like soup, with the primary ingredients being fig-leaf gourd (sambo), pumpkin (zapallo) and 12 different kinds of beans and grains with salt cod (bacalao) cooked in milk (due to the Catholic religious prohibition against red meat during Holy Week). It is also generally garnished with hard boiled eggs, fried plantains, herbs, parsley, and sometimes empanadas. The 12 beans represent the 12 apostles of Jesus, and the bacalao (fish) is symbolic of Jesus himself. Fanesca is usually consumed at midday, which is generally the principal meal of the day within Ecuadorian culture.*

In the afternoon, we re-observed the world-famous Jesus el Gran Poder Procesion (Jesus the Great Power Procession). We had the amazing experience of seeing this same event in 2011. To view some wonderful photos of this beautiful and unique procession you can go to our website or go directly to: <http://ecuadorisaiah52seven.shutterfly.com/>

Then to end this day of remembering the death of Christ, we enjoyed a chicken (white meat) dinner in our home with the Carcelen fire chief and his family sharing with each other our remembrances of what Jesus did for us on the cross and how He continues to bless us in our lives.

Sharing A Music Legacy Treasure

At the beginning of April we received word that **Radio HCJB was making available 100's of music CD's that they no longer use. The only requirement was to take only what we would use and consider making a 50-cent donation for each one to the radio ministry.** What a sea of treasure! - - - from Tennessee Ernie Ford, George Beverly Shea, and Billy Graham to Point of Grace, Jaci Velasquez, and Third Day! Our greatest find was a City of Gold Radio Special CD with Integrity Gold Record Hits all one disc! **We bought 85 CD's with the intention of not only enjoying great Christian music at home, but also sharing them with Ecuadorians who enjoy listening to English-speaking singing artists! What a great way to share the Christian message with others!**

Just an Ordinary Day at the Doctor's Office?

Or so we thought! One day, while waiting for the Doctor's office to open, a young man approached Darrell demanding money. Darrell, too sick to even stand up from sitting on the cement ledge, simply said "no". After 3 attempts to ask for money, the young man pulled a broken kitchen steak-knife from his pocket, dropped it (embarrassing for him but giving time for us to think), picked it up and nervously put it back in his pocket and then raised his voice making one more attempt to ask for money. Darrell, having lived on the streets as a kid, knew that this guy wasn't serious about harming anyone and repeated, this time, more firmly and loudly "NO!" The poor guy simply didn't know what to do, became very nervous and said "okay" and left! **We praise God for Darrell's "street wisdom", your prayers, and for God's loving protection!**

Trip to the Pacific Coast

We'd been waiting for this trip since last fall. Our Ecuadorian host family invited us to join them for a 3-day church retreat. For \$50 each, we would be blessed with 3 days on the Pacific Coast, 9 meals, and coach bus transportation! **Two buses full of Ecuadorians and 2 "gringos" (guess who?!) took a 5 hr bus ride to Atacambes on the NW coast of Ecuador.** The trip started out rough with Sondra being very sick from the chemical medicine she recently was taking from the local Dr. (too strong for her body) and from the 6 hours of traveling with a speedy bus-driver on winding, narrow, mountainous roads at night. Also, we, along with a number of other families staying at the resort, had their rooms invaded by intruders who stole cellphones, cameras, etc. (Praise God we only lost a 4-yr old \$30 cell phone).

Upon our first day's arrival, Sondra stayed in bed for the morning but by the afternoon was walking the shoreline collecting seashells and fossils. We enjoyed warm humid breezes, the sound of ocean waves and seagulls, interesting seafood meals, competitive water-games, great conversation in Spanish, pool-side worship, music, and baptisms, and a hair-raising boat-ride over the rough tidal waves.

The best blessing was the opportunity to stroll barefoot into the waves and release our son's, (Aric's) ashes into the Pacific. ----- >

What an amazing time of experiencing the coastal culture and getting to know our brothers and sisters-in-Christ!



"At Peace in the Pacific"

We Did It!

Friday, May 8, we completed our final day of 25 weeks (2 semesters) of language school! We took the final evaluative exam, and with God's help and your prayers, reached our goal! Our mission agency needs us to be "at the Intermediate Level" and we made it! This does not mean we're finished with learning the language because it is a daily and lifetime process. It simply means that we are able to carry on basic-intermediate meaningful conversations with the help of God and the patience of the Ecuadorian people! We still have to organize 2 semesters of hand-written notes on our computers, study flashcards, and practice, practice, practice. Every week, we learn new words, phrases, and expressions. **Despite our improvement, we still can cause a room full of Ecuadorians to bust out laughing** - - - like last Sunday when we tried to say "Planean tener un bebe pronto" (they plan to have a baby soon) but instead we said "Planeamos tener un bebe pronto" (WE plan to have a baby soon!)



Jenn-Assist. Dir., Luz-Director, Adrianna-Professor

Celebrating With A Friend

This weekend, our friend Monica will come to spend the night in our home. She recently graduated from the university with a teaching degree in English. She has worked for many years trying to accomplish this. Without this degree and the new changes in government laws, Monica would no longer have been able to teach English at the orphanage where we have sponsored children. Monica lives at home with her parents and makes \$380/month. We were unable to attend her graduation, so this weekend we will be sharing special meals, taking walks in the park, watching some movies together, and eating ice cream!

Sondra, Monica, and one of her students, an orphaned youth who lives at the orphanage where she teaches.- - - >



It's Beginning to Feel Like Home

During the past 2 months, we moved the last of our second-hand furniture from HCJB/RB to our apt., received another 2 suitcases full of "goodies" from the U.S., and had our kitchen counter-top replaced, (could have sworn we were with "renovation messes" when we sold our Wisconsin home?!) Pictures are hung, we've determined our "prayer and Bible-reading" corners, and the neighbors greet us when we come and go each day. We've had guests for meals, talk to the lady next-door on the roof-top when she's doing her laundry, and Darrell is already the designated "household repairman" according to our landlady. The local shop-owners greet us and stop to make conversation when we walk by, and the people in the local park have finally figured out we aren't "tourists". Now, they ask us - - - Where do you live?, How long have you been here? And **How long do you plan to stay? We tell them "por cualquier tiempo que Dios quiere!" (For whatever time God wants!)**

Our Goal Is To Keep Our Info Current And To Make It Easy For You To Stay In Touch!

So - - - we've changed our photo,
added our new account number, Ecuador mailing address,
Skype name, and Ecuador cellphone # to the end of our newsletter!
We think about you often, and would LOVE to hear from you!



Darrell and Sondra Holden

Serving with Ripe For Harvest - Partnering with Reach Beyond



in Ecuador, South America



Send Your Financial Gifts to:

Ripe For Harvest
Acct 20319
PO Box 487
Monument CO 80132-0487

Our Email:

dsholden.ec@gmail.com

Our Personal Website:

www.ReachBeyondTheMountains.com

Our Ecuador Cell:

099-908-2264

Our Skype Name:

dsholden1

Send Letters/Cards/Gifts Locally to:

Darrell and Sondra Holden
c/o Tina Bush
1250 Peach St.
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494

If Under 3 lbs Can Send Letter/Cards/Gifts Directly To:

HCJB Global (Darrell or Sondra Holden)
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