



Holden Newsletter

We hope the following highlights will help you find and read what interests you!
Main Topics **Main Points** **Praises/Requests**

Dear Friend, Encourager, Partner-in-Mission,

TAKING MUCH NEEDED BREAKS

In early September, Reach Beyond provided a "Men's Night Out". The guys watched a soccer championship together on television and shared some homemade chili. Unfortunately, Ecuador lost! But the guys still enjoyed the food and fellowship! - Sound familiar "Packer Fans"?

The noise, busyness, and 2.5 million people in this city of cement tends to add a bit of stress to our lives. We deliberately try to escape to some "green space" every month or two. One Sunday this month, we decided to take the bus to the center of the city and spend the afternoon in El Ejido Park. Sounds a little strange to take a 30 minute bus-ride to a park when we have one two blocks from our house but El Ejido is our favorite. Parks in Ecuador are of no comparison to the beautiful ones in Wisconsin, but we enjoy El Ejido because of it's very tall trees, artist's who display their work, entertainers, food carts, and families! We spread out a blanket, took a nap, enjoyed some fresh fruit from a vendor, strolled under the huge Cyprus trees and returned home renewed again.

It's funny how some people think missionaries don't need "vacations". Even Jesus went to the mountains, the desert, and out in a boat at sea to "get away" so he could be renewed for the next part of his ministry. We've taken two vacations in the last 12 years and this year we are celebrating 30 years of marriage and 33 years since we met. So in October we're doing it! We're taking money out of our personal savings and going to the coast for 7 nights and 8 days. We're traveling seven hours by bus and staying in an inexpensive resort in a small community. We'll be right on the beach in a semi-desolate location with palm trees, ocean waves, and very few people. Just the right atmosphere to unwind, relax, rejuvenate, and re-connect with God, His creation, and each other!

We thank God for these opportunities and hope that you will rejoice with us!

WHO'S REALLY BEING BLESSED?

Meet our friend, Cynthia, and her son, Sebastian. Cynthia is the one and only professional cleaning staff for HCJB Radio's large 2-story building. She is a single mother of 3 children. Sebastian is her youngest and concerns her the most because of his emotional disabilities. Cynthia makes approximately \$370 per month and spends \$240 to rent a run-down 3-bedroom apartment. In the past, she and her children lived with her mother. But, recently, she needed to relocate for two reasons: 1) Her sister was murdered by her husband, so her sister's five children now live with Cynthia's mother. 2) Her oldest son was beginning to hang out with the drug-dealers and thieves down at the local park. Now, Cynthia spends two-thirds of her monthly income so that her children can live in a "better" and "safer" neighborhood.



Last year, we became aware of the many struggles in Cynthia's life: a disabled son, a teenage son headed toward the wrong path, a teen-age daughter going through hormonal changes, a sister who was murdered, and scraping by on \$140 per month to pay utilities, school supplies, clothes, food to feed a family of four, and more. We also became aware of the back-pain she was experiencing and the beat-up pair of tennies she came to work in. So, I, Sondra took her shopping and we bought her a good pair of work shoes to help support her feet and her posture. With tears in her eyes, Cynthia informed us that "No one has ever done anything like this for me!" While traveling to the area where we shopped, Cynthia shared her heart with me – her concerns, her fears, her doubts. Cynthia is a new Christian, young in her faith and full of questions. I thank God that He gave me the right words to say (in Spanish) which Cynthia said brought her much comfort and hope in our Lord.

When an Ecuadorian receives something from someone they feel obligated to "re-pay" that person. Many of them are unable to do this. As a result they will say "Dios le pague!" (May God repay you!) and then invite you to their home for a meal (whether they can afford it or not). Cynthia decided she wanted to invite us one Sunday and of course we accepted the invitation. Our meal consisted of choclo (field corn), habas (high-protein beans), and queso blanco (white cheese). Cynthia brought out her best plastic plates and served us this meal with a big smile. She was so honored that we could be her guests (although we know that by providing us this meal, it took a significant chunk out of her meager budget).



Then after lunch, the kids asked us if we would please walk to the local park with them. Darrell and the 3 kids enjoyed shooting some hoops while Cynthia and I took in the warm sun. Later, one of Cynthia's other sisters came by (with 1 of her 10 children!) and soon we 3 women were just



chatting away. By the end of the day, her sister also invited us to, one day soon, come to her home for a meal and to meet her 9 other children! These 2 women, who are raising 13 children between them and who have so little, displayed such amazing generosity and friendship! Exactly, WHO'S REALLY being blessed?!

THREE DAYS IN SHELL (THE JUNGLE)

Sept 25-28 Darrell made another five-hour trip to Shell to attend a number of meetings with leaders of various ministries including Reach Beyond's Community Development program, the CHILI program which provides training for upcoming missionaries who will work with the the Community Development program, the Aves de Los Socorros (formerly Mission Aviation Fellowship), and the Shell Fire Department. His goal was to discover whether they have any existing crisis plans, help them develop plans if they don't, or improve upon the ones they already have. The idea is that if and when there would be a crisis in the Shell area, that all ministry and community leaders have enough shared information in place to be able to support one another during and after the crisis. He was not able to meet with a few of the leaders due to schedule conflicts so he will return in November in order to continue building relationships with them and sharing more information on crisis planning. Sondra will most likely accompany him being that the return trip is during the week of Thanksgiving.

A GUEST FROM WISCONSIN

Sept 14 - 26 we had a guest stay in our home from Community Church in Stevens Point, WI. Cheryl is a board member of a non-denominational ministry called TransACT Hope of which one of the Pastors from Woodlands Church is involved. You can check out this ministry on our U.S. church's website at www.woodlandschurch.org. (under Plover Location - Local Outreach) Cheryl had been thinking about "someday" participating in overseas ministry. Her heart passion, like mine, is for working with families, particularly women and children in need. So she stepped out of her comfort zone and came to visit us and the ministries we are involved in here in Ecuador!

Cheryl and I, Sondra, spent five 8-10 hour days visiting the ministries of: Reach Beyond/HCJB Radio, Dunamis (ministry to minor girls rescued from human-trafficking), the Zambiza Dump Ministry (the dump work-site, the women's program, the children's before/after school program, the daycare, the sites where new homes have been built for some of the families, and a home visit to minister to Sonia, whose one-room dirt floor squatter home had been destroyed by an avalanche), as well as, Pan de Vida (Bread of Life) which ministers to the poor of Quito <http://www.pandevida.org.ec/> We also spent 2 weekends providing Cheryl with many cultural experiences both in and outside of the city! Here are a few highlights:

Thursday, Sept 15 - Cheryl, myself, and Teresa, the QFRC ministry leader, made a home visit to follow-up with Sonia. She, her husband, and 3 children live, during the day, with Sonia's parents in another one-room dirt floor squatter home. At night they walk over a mile up a steep hill to a rented room where they sleep. They pay \$70 per month for this rented "bedroom" and will continue doing this until they can save up enough money to begin re-building their home. Extreme Response legally can not build a home for them because the property on which their destroyed home is located is not their land. This day we brought Sonia's family some food, prayed with Sonia, and committed to help her purchase the school supplies that her 3 children need.

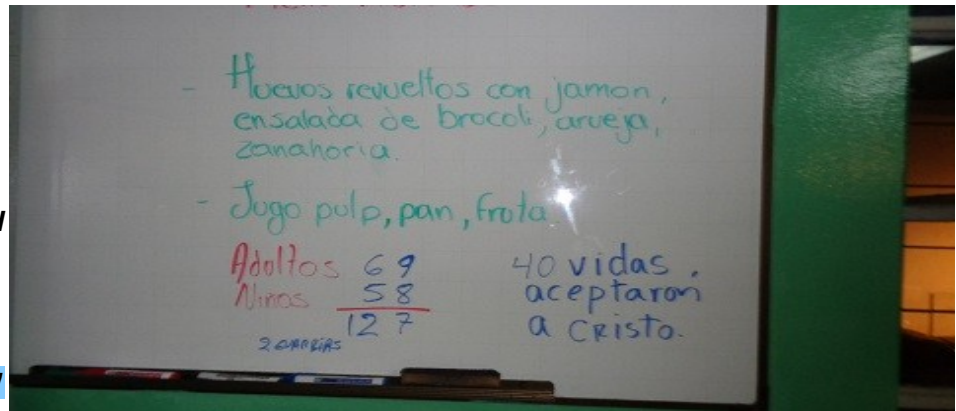
Cheryl and I also visited the El Ejido Park (a local park), Mercado Artesanal (an artisan market), and Mercado Ofelia (a huge fruit market). These are 3 of the many exotic fruits we bought that Cheryl was able to try for the first time! But she said she would "pass" on the chicken soup with chicken feet.



Saturday, Sept 17 - Darrell and I took Cheryl to Mitad del Mundo (a town that is in Middle of the World) where she was able to visit many museums, see and hear a live indigenous dance performance, and experience standing with her feet in the North and South hemisphere while straddling the actual equator! In the evening we visited Olde Town Quito where she saw the Presidential Palace, followed by a walk through La Ronda - an old cobblestone street filled with restaurants, music, and entertainers!

Wednesday, Sept 21 - we had a special meeting with Oscar, the founder of Pan de Vida. Much fruit came from this meeting! At the end of October, Oscar will be visiting Wisconsin and will give a presentation about the ministry at Community Church of Stevens Point! AND - Oscar invited Darrell to help with a retreat/seminar that will be held in January. Oscar is bringing 35 Pastors to Quito, from the Coastal Region of Ecuador. He is providing them with a time of restoration and renewal. These Pastors are survivors of the 7.6 earthquake of April 16, 2016. Many of these Pastors have had their church buildings damaged or destroyed, church members injured or killed, and have experience personal/family losses as well. Darrell will be spending some time sharing with the Pastors how to prepare for a crisis, what to do during a crisis, and how to net-work with other churches after a crisis to reach out to the community!

This particular evening the staff and volunteers at Pan de Vida held a Bible-teaching and worship service, and fed hot meals to 69 adults, 58 children and 2 guards. Cheryl, Darrell, and I helped with the children's program. By the end of the evening 40 people had accepted Christ!



Friday September 23 - Cheryl treated me to an overnight stay at The Rose Cottage, in the village of Otavalo, 2 hours north of Quito. Friday, we spent the afternoon walking through and shopping at the world famous Otavalo Market. (Cheryl did most of the shopping while I struck up conversations with the vendors and locals). Darrell joined us the following morning and took us to the Peguche Park/Waterfall and Condor Park to see a presentation of birds of rapture in flight.



View from the Rose Cottage



Cheryl and Sondra by Mural at Entrance to Park



Old Indigenous Woman Walking Barefoot



Memorial Site of the Enslaved Indigenous People



Peguche Waterfall



Indigenous Family Enjoying Peguche Park



Cheryl, Sondra, Darrell, Indigenous Family, Llamas



Andean Mountain Condor

We thank the Lord for the amazing time we spent together in ministry, as well as while spending time in God's creation, learning about the indigenous people and their culture!

We also look forward to any future guests that the Lord may send us!



Bird of Rapture in Flight During Presentation

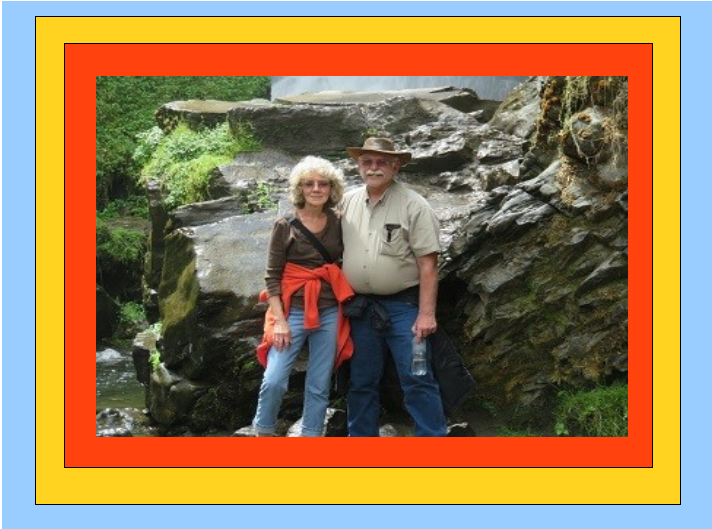
Prayer Requests:

- Please keep Cynthia and her three children in your prayers. Pray for healing from the tragic death of her sister, that she will be able to find special help for her emotionally-disabled son, for her oldest son to stay on the "straight and narrow path" in life, and for Cynthia's faith to grow in the Lord's faithfulness.
- Please pray for a fruitful time for Oscar while visiting various cities in Wisconsin, including his time he will spend at the Community Church of Stevens Point.
- * Please pray for Darrell as he prepares for the Pastor's seminar in January.



Darrell and Sondra Holden

Serving with Ripe For Harvest - Partnering with Reach Beyond - Ecuador, S.A.



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