



Holden Newsletter - January 2017

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,

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND POLITICS

Monday, January 9 - Luis and Gladys, an indigenous pastor and his wife, shared dinner with our indigenous friends, Patricio and Rosita, in our home. Our hope was that our friends would become more comfortable with spending time getting to know other Christians besides us. Rosita, a devout Catholic, and Patricio, who is not a practicing Catholic, are both reading their Bibles and are in search of a deeper relationship with Jesus. They also have strong roots in their indigenous culture and traditions and are suspicious that evangelical Christians want them to give up their cultural ways and to denounce their Catholic practices. We realize that this can be a very delicate topic of discussion and the last thing we want to do is to impose our North American ideology of Christianity upon them.

By providing a dinner during which they could get to know Pastor Luis and his wife better we could provide our friends with an opportunity for discussion about cultural traditions and how they fit into the picture of having a relationship with Jesus. Both Patricio and Rosita seemed nervous and Patricio began talking, instead, about Ecuadorian politics, we think, in order to not only calm his own fears but to find out what the pastor's thinking was on current issues. The evening did not exactly go as we had hoped and Darrell and I knew that we needed to not be involved in a discussion about Ecuadorian politics. So I, Sondra, shared with Patricio something from my past. I told him that I had an aunt with whom I would discuss politics and the tough things going on in the world. We'd often talk for hours. But when all the sharing of fears and concerns was said and done, my aunt would always say "Isn't it great to know that in the middle of it all, Jesus is still sitting on the throne!" Pastor Luis looked shocked to realize I could clearly state this to Patricio in Spanish and the spirit in Patricio's heart seemed to calm down. We all then chimed in with an "Amen" of agreement, and Pastor Luis was then able to continue calming Patricio's heart over the personal concerns that he had. **Please continue to pray for the Holy Spirit to work in Patricio and Rosita's hearts and to calm their fears in concern with their perceptions of Christianity.**

INCONVENIENCE? OR BLESSING?

Thursday, January 12 - Today I was running late again because of not being able to find a bus that was not packed beyond legal capacity with people. Frustrated that I had to take a later bus, I plopped down in the back seat mumbling to myself about the public bus situation I'm confronted with on an almost daily basis, declaring in my mind that this might be 'another one of those days' and how much I hated the inconvenience. Then, I met a man on the bus.

It is not uncommon to see and hear vendors on public buses in Quito selling everything from chewing gum and candy, to homemade empanadas, pens and pencils, and copies of music CD's. **But I had never seen anyone selling children's books before.** Because I was on my way to helping the Zambiza children with their school work, I thought it worth my time to check out the books he was selling. It turned out he was selling various quality workbooks for math and other school subjects for only \$2 each! (Typical children's paperback books here start at \$5 each.) Having no money on me, I asked him if I could have his name and phone number because I would like to talk with the director of the Zambiza after-school program I am involved in and that we may want to purchase some of his books. I thought for sure he'd just snicker

and walk away - after all, how many 'gringitas' had he ever met with no money! But instead, he told me to pick out as many books as I wanted, show them to the director, and then call him next week so we could all meet somewhere to pay him. I told him this was not necessary but he insisted.

When I arrived at the center to work with the children, I told the director what had happened and he agreed with me that we've never known of any Ecuadorian street vendor to give or loan out an item in good faith to be paid later! The director was impressed with many of the books and decided to phone this gentleman to purchase some much needed practice workbooks for the children in the after-school program. I then realized that running late today was actually God's way of blessing this ministry and I thanked Him for it and asked forgiveness for grumbling about what I thought was an inconvenience.

THE FREEDOM TO SPEAK

Friday, January 13 - Tonight we had dinner with a Missionary Care couple of Reach Beyond - Jeff and Nancy, from Colorado Springs, who used to serve as overseas missionaries both in Quito, Ecuador, and in Singapore. They now serve as Care Staff for Reach Beyond's missionaries who serve around the world. This month, they were visiting the RB missionaries in Quito. We've met with Jeff and/or Nancy during their other visits to Ecuador but this time we had something special in mind.

With recently having experienced a 'serious breach of security' situation with another un-named ministry, we were in need of being able to discuss our thoughts and feelings about it face-to-face with someone. Because of the delicacy of the situation, we have only been able to discuss this with one other missionary and two of our Ecuadorian friends within the church. We have not even been able to talk about it over Skype phone nor Skype video with any U.S. staff, family, or friends. Yes, we've shared minimal details and prayer requests in a 'coded' format to our prayer partners but no more. And until the situation is deemed 'safe' we have no one to talk to. So we invited Jeff and Nancy into the privacy of our home to share what was on our hearts and so that they could be praying for us and this ministry. We praise God for the blessing of having Missionary Care Staff available to us with whom we can talk about such matters.

LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

A.T. and Crystal are young newly-weds, who recently came to serve with Dunamis from Fuel the Mission. A.T. (Tomas) has a degree in construction management, and Crystal, in social work. Tomas manages the construction project for a new home for girls rescued from human-trafficking and Crystal works directly with the girls in the same program. Much like us, they've had their share of challenges with the culture, the language, and more practical things like obtaining a driver's license, and renewing their visas. Darrell and I decided to come alongside them and be available to them as an 'older couple' to whom they can look to for guidance. So, Sunday, January 15, we invited them to our home for a meal, enjoying the afternoon and sharing stories with each other. We are blessed to have a young, energetic couple in our lives to inspire us as well!

PUPPETS AND PANCAKES

This month I was able to observe Robbie, the coordinator of the After-School Program at the QFRC, teach cooking classes and puppet ministry to the Zambiza children. Robbie, a single missionary from Canada, is an inspiring young man overflowing with enthusiasm for the educational development of the children of the Zambiza dump workers who are the first generation to have the opportunity to attend school. The after-school program, held four days per week, provides up to 40 children with a hot meal, help with their schoolwork, access to computers, Bible studies, help with school supplies and uniforms, creative-play time, and practical living skills. I work with Robbie, and two Ecuadorian teachers in this ministry each week.

Robbie, who had attended a puppet-ministry camp as a youth, decided how “very cool” it would be to provide the kids with the opportunity to learn how to construct props and provide a puppet show using worship music. Both Robbie and I believe, that **one day, some of these children may have the opportunity to share their faith with others and that puppet ministry is one of the many ways in which they could accomplish this!** Also, by providing an afternoon of learning how to make simple foods, like pancakes from inexpensive ingredients, **these children can begin to** use not only their math skills measuring ingredients, but to **develop the skills** for preparing food, washing dishes, and clean-up **to help out their families!**

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL IN THE JUNGLE

At the end of January, Reach Beyond provided a spiritual retreat, at no cost, for all of its missionaries in Ecuador. The 70+ adults and children enjoyed four days in Puyo and/or Shell staying at various housing arrangements. Darrell and I were privileged to stay at 'La Hosteria Shell' with modern amenities, beautiful tropical gardens and a swimming pool (although it was too rainy and cool to swim).

The new Reach Beyond President, Pastor Steve Harling and his wife Becky, provided us with teaching, small group discussion, worship and prayer during daily morning and afternoon sessions. Breakfasts were provided for us at La Hosteria Shell, and lunches and suppers at various restaurant locations.

The conference center was located within the jungle although still in the town of Puyo. But once inside the grounds of the conference center you would never suspect we were in the town of Puyo. With wooden and stone paths, grass roofs, bamboo and wood structures, ponds, cascading waters, lush jungle foliage, and all the accompanying tropical bird calls, **we were able to relax and be spiritually renewed in the rustic atmosphere and drink in the beauty of God's creation.**



Despite cloudy skies and intermittent heavy rains, the lush green countryside, majestic mountains, and swollen rivers captured our hearts as we traveled to and from the Shell-Puyo area

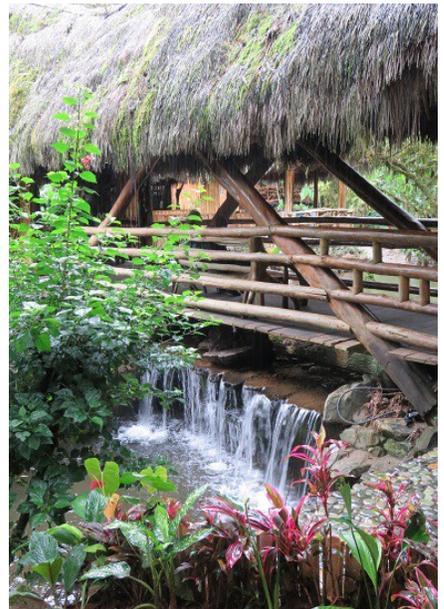
We were grateful to God for His protection from potential floods crossing the roads and mudslides.



Hosteria Shell provided us with an atmosphere of tranquility amid God's amazing creation as displayed in the meticulously-groomed gardens.



Hanging vines at Hosteria Shell, yellow tropical bird, exotic hanging flower, Darrell at entrance of conference center, cascading waters below bridge at conference center, statues of tribal women, and visit to ice cream shop with our friends Oscar and Nancy.



JUNGLE PILOT AND FIREFIGHTER/PARAMEDIC FINALLY MEET

We were finally able to visit the Mission Aviation Fellowship hanger in Shell - now 'Alas de Socorro' (Wings of Rescue). We were blessed to see and hear how these pilots are reaching the remote areas of the jungle transporting missionaries, cargo, medical supplies, and Bibles to the tribal people groups. We'd like to share this amazing video with you! <https://youtu.be/UfoFiMXv-3A>



Map of Remote Areas Reached by Alas de Socorro



Pilot Training and Assimilation Stations



Aircraft Delivering Bibles to the Shuar Tribe - - >



< Dan Whitehead, Security Coordinator and pilot for 'Alas' and Darrell will be reviewing the MAF's safety and security plans and coordinate future plans to network with Reach Beyond's missionaries in Shell during a crisis. We thank God for this awesome opportunity to pool resources to help fellow missionaries.



Praising the Lord for the recent dedication and/or inauguration of two clean water projects in rural Ecuador. The rural residents now have much easier access to a safe water supply through the help of Reach Beyond's community development staff, three N. American churches and some church groups from Germany. **Pray** for the rural churches to be encouraged because of these clean water projects.

Praising God for conferences held recently by HCJB2-FM in Guayaquil, Ecuador, allowing listeners to learn about "Biblical Tools for the Family." **Pray** for families lives to be changed spiritually.

Praising God for Radio HCJB in Quito, Ecuador who is planning and implementing a digital platform allowing listeners to hear radio broadcasts 'on demand'. **Pray** that the mission's web outreach would have a significant impact on people's lives around the world.



Darrell and Sondra Holden

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



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