



Holden Newsletter - September

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,

SEPTEMBER 1-15

We made a trip by bus to Conocoto to visit the orphanage and our Ecuadorian friend, and her family, who have worked at the orphanage for many years. Monica teaches English at the orphanage school and her parents Rosa and Raphael have worked in maintenance there for more than 40 years. **We also visited her parents and other relatives at her house and retrieved our personal belongings that they were storing for us since we were here in 2011.**

We had hoped to also be reunited, at the orphanage, with our sponsor son, Cristian, but a couple weeks before we left the U.S. we were informed that he had left. He had been struggling emotionally as a teenager and had repeatedly acted inappropriately with the staff. This truly saddens us, but we are encouraged in that his older sister is now a housemother at the orphanage. Although the orphanage legally cannot tell us where Cristian is now living, we will meet with his sister in the future and are hoping that she will disclose the information to us. **We are praying that we will be able to continue to have contact with him and encourage him as he struggles with becoming a young man in this world without parents.** In the past, our sponsor daughter, Wendy, had left the orphanage and the Lord was able to reunite us with her and her mentally ill mother in the town of Pisuli where she lives. **We trust that if this is the Lord's will to find Cristian, He will lead us to him.**

We attended the baby shower for Pastor Salomon's wife, Lucy. In this culture, the husband is included in the event as are male guests. Pastor Salomon played guitar and sang a love song to his wife and family and we all shed a few tears. We also played games, ate snacks and cake, presented gifts, and prayed over the couple and the baby that was to come. Here they call childbirth "dar a luz", which means "to give light". Lucy is the director of the language school. She is pregnant with her second child and quite anxious about the delivery because she had several problems with her first. **I was able to spend some time with Lucy praying and encouraging her that the Lord was in control and would help her through this.**

We attended our first HCJB staff meeting where we participated in worship and shared the ministries in which we are (or will be) involved. We are learning more and more about the history of HCJB/RB and the amazing things God does through the missionaries here.

We spent 3-4 hours one Saturday, packing 3 suitcases, with someone, over SKYPE. We were not able to pack up the additional things we wanted transported here before we left. A lady from our church went through each item and showed them to us via SKYPE video so we could pick which things we wanted. **Then, a couple from our church drove the suitcases to Lake Mills, Wisconsin to the house of a nurse, we know, who was bringing an E3 Partners short-term evangelism team to Ecuador on Oct 10th.** The team usually flies in at Guayaquil which is about 5 hours south of here. We were planning on making the long bus trip to pick up our suitcases, but the team could only find a flight to Quito with a connecting flight to Guayaquil. Their inconvenience became a convenience for us in that it saved us 10 hours by bus and a lot of concerns about safety issues while traveling late at night. We did have to stand and wait for over 2 hours to receive our suitcases, and they did misplace one of our suitcases at the airport for more than 36 hours, but **everything did arrive undamaged and nothing was stolen.**

Our friend, Monica's brother-in-law, Cesar On-a and his wife are professional musicians with the Ecuador National Symphony. In 2011 they invited us to one of their amazing performances. This time, Cesar **extended a personal invitation to a private recital in which he would perform solo (with a back-up band) and at which they would tape the performance "live" for television! The guests could come by personal invitation only and the event was held at the National Assembly (which is equal to the House of Congress Building)!** No one is ever allowed inside of this building without a special invitation, especially the room in which the taping occurred. Unfortunately because of traffic we were late. This experience was quite intimidating in that we were approached by more than 7 guards, in full formal uniform who wanted to know what business we had to be there. Cesar could not wait for us at the gate or he would be late for his performance. We were trying to explain to the guards (in Spanish) that we had permission to attend but, in the frustration of being late, we could not remember Cesar's last name! Fortunately, the Lord softened the hearts of the guards and they led us inside where Cesar's wife and family waved for us to come in! **We were able to meet other music celebrities and take amazing photos of the event and the art-filled walls within!**

SEPTEMBER 16-30

Our language school not only provides language study but cultural study. Every other Friday, our class goes into the community to experience something about the culture. This week we were to use our language skills to discover new fruits and vegetables, ask the merchants questions about them, and then purchase something that we've never heard of or tasted before. **Upon arrival at the famous Ofelia Market we were overwhelmed with the sights, sounds, smells, and flavors of the wide variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, fish, and live animals available for tasting and purchasing.** Even Darrell, who used to haul produce from California to Wisconsin each week, said he had never seen so much produce in his life! We saw everything from live, colorful purple and orange crabs tied together in bundles, and live ducks being hauled home in plastic shopping bags, to a mountain of pineapple taller than Darrell. A woman with a machete sliced one open for us to taste. **We almost purchased more than we could carry and only spend \$9 and ate fruit every day for the next week!**

September 20 was our wedding anniversary. We would not yet celebrate this event until the following weekend, but this night we were invited to the home of our "Big Brother" family from HCJB/RB. Dave and Beth and their 3 children have lived here for years. Both of them grew up as missionary kids (MKs) and now have 4 MKs of their own. They've taken on the task of being our "surrogate/big brother" family and are available to help us with adapting to life as missionaries. They prepared a huge meal for us, shared God-stories with us, and helped us with some computer issues we were having. **We thank God that HCJB/RB provides this kind of service to new missionary families.**

From the time we moved into our home with our family, they have had problems with their refrigerator (the one we use) and the household plumbing. The first week we were here, they cooked all of our meals for us until they had the money to fix the refrigerator. **Once the refrig was fixed, the plumbing started leaking, not just in one place, but several, and repairing them means tearing cement walls apart to find them and fix them. We thank the Lord that we have been able to physically help the family with repairs and to find reputable outside help who are willing to provide their services for free or a reduced cost . (The husband/father of the house left years ago to live with another woman and does not financially support the family in any way).**

We are presently full-time language school students. This involves 4 hours of class each day, 4-8 hours of homework each afternoon and evening, plus time spent practicing conversation with our family each day. What we had learned in 4 months in language school in 2011 was, this time, covered in 4 weeks! The pace is overwhelming and already, after 4 weeks it seems that everyone's brains cannot absorb any more than what they have, but with God's help we will all continue pressing forward. **Our day starts at 6:30 am and usually ends between 11pm and 1am.**

The bi-annual HCJB/RB retreat. It had been a long year of selling our house and possessions, preparing for the mission field, losing our son, moving to Ecuador and now adjusting to life as full-time language students. This weekend, which was an answer to many prayers, was a grand opportunity to refresh and renew as well as celebrate our wedding anniversary. Over 30 staff and their children rode in vans to

Papallacta, approximately 4 hours from Quito. We stayed in a building owned by HCJB/RB that was once a lodge for the engineers who worked on the hydroelectric project in this community. The completed project now supplies the hydroelectric power for the community as well as the power needed for the HCJB/RB's radio towers. We spent the weekend, worshiping, praying, relaxing, exercising, exploring, playing games, eating, and getting to know each other and what God has done in our lives. It was wonderful to chat with other missionaries, laugh, cry, and share our lives together. We also enjoyed hiking through a hummingbird reserve along the Napo River (which feeds into the Amazon River) and relaxing in hot-spring pools which are at the base of the volcano that is nearby in Papallacta. **We praise God that the cost for the entire weekend for us both was \$75! We were truly blessed!**

Language school is both exciting and encouraging, as well as grueling and humbling. If you ever want to feel inadequate just try to learn another language! Some days, very young Ecuadorian children can speak better than we can; on other days, the Lord amazes us with the words he puts in our mouths and the fact that a stranger understood us! We have now been in classes for 9 weeks and have the equivalent of 2 years of high school Spanish grammar crammed into our brains. (We have already been taught 8 of the 15 verb tenses!) There is presently little time to actually study, memorize, practice, and/or review. The pace is set for the university students, not the professional students, so the majority of the class is experiencing the same level of stress. But we are "in this" together! **We all realize why we are here and why it is so important to learn the language. We are motivated and encouraged by each other.** Already we are being challenged to read newspaper articles, summarize them and report on them, as well as write compositions, and write and give presentations...yes, all in Spanish. HCJB/RB encourages us that they expect us to know how to use verbs in the past, present, and future tenses by the time we are done with school and that the rest will come over time. But meanwhile, we still have to have all of them taught to us. **Being taught something is not the same as learning it. Right now, we are being taught much more than we are learning; and later we will be taught less and learn more as we practice, practice, practice.**



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