



Holden Newsletter - October 2014

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,

This month everyone in the house and most of the neighborhood, has been experiencing “la gripe” (stronger than a bad cold, but less strong than the flu). Darrell has been struggling with it for over 4 weeks; me about 2 weeks. The climate here is the same day to day but changes often and rapidly within any one day. In less than 10 minutes the warm and extremely dry air (ave 15% humidity) changes several times per day into very damp and cool air. This has a profound effect on the sinuses, even of the Ecuadorians. In July and August there was no rain, now Sept - Nov there is rain almost every afternoon, evening, and/or night. It is important to carry both sunscreen and an umbrella daily, as well as several layers of clothes. **We praise God that natural medicines and remedies are so available here and we continue to have great success using them.**

On Friday, October 10, we, with our class, **participated in our second cultural-education activity which was a visit to the Basilica.** This amazing structure took 100 years to construct and still is not finished. Their legend says that when it is finished, the world will end. **Our professor gave us a personal tour, explaining its history and the culture behind it.** We climbed more than 245 steps up steep, winding staircases (ones that would never be legal in the U.S.). We also crossed an internal wooden bridge located just above the ceiling of the cathedral until we reached the outer balcony of the highest steeple (approx 375 feet in the air). Darrell, along with a few of the other more brave students continued up 3 more extremely steep and treacherous flights of steps outside of the main steeple which led to another steeple. These last 3 staircases, in the U.S. would require safety harnesses (if they would even allow it at all). The view was breathtaking, but my legs would not cooperate in even taking one more step as I arched my head up to view my husband disappearing out of sight up the outside of the steeple! **The architecture, stained glass art, and paintings was like nothing we had ever seen before (and we've visited St. Patrick's cathedral in New York!). We thank God for this awesome opportunity!** Some evening we want to view the Basilica when all the floodlights are upon this massive structure because we have seen this only in postcards.

On Friday, October 17, **we attended our 2nd monthly HCJB/RB staff meeting. We worshiped in English, listened to the announcements in both English and Spanish, and engaged in a SKYPE video-conference with the President of HCJB/RB.** He answered various questions about the many changes and the future of the ministry here in Ecuador. The present government has made many changes in the past 5-6 years which continues to greatly affect the presence of Christian missions in this country. The conclusion is that the present situation calls for much adaptation and flexibility in concern with the rapid changes. **We are praising God for HCJB/RB's increasing global focus as Ecuadorian missionaries are presently being trained and sent to the Middle East, East Asia, and other areas of the world where it is difficult to be exposed to the Gospel.**

On Sunday, October 19, **the youth and the children of the Nazarene church brought Sunday School to our home for little Beli.** Verito is the oldest daughter in the house and mother of 4, including 2 year old Anabel (Beli) who is now home from the hospital. Verito did not feel comfortable yet taking Beli to church because **Beli just had open heart surgery just a couple of weeks ago.** Little Beli had a hole in her heart which needed to be closed. It is amazing that they actually disconnected her heart from her little body, hooked her up to a by-pass machine to pump her blood, repaired her heart, and then reconnected it! They expected her to be in the hospital for at least a month. **Many prayers were being offered up for little Beli and she returned home in 2 weeks!**

She is doing much better in that her little hands are no longer purple from poor circulation and she has much more energy than before. **Darrell, as a paramedic, keeps close watch on her incisions and the process of her healing.** This sweet little 2-year old, who often sits on my lap in church, imitates me when I sing, raise my hands in worship, and clap to the songs. And at the end of any prayer being said, she will shout a loud "amen"! **Thank you so much for your prayers offered up on her behalf!**

On Tuesday, October 21, I, **Sondra, spent the afternoon with Tempy McCombe at HCJB/RB.** Tempy and her husband George have been serving with HCJB/RB for years. They are now living back in the U.S. Near their children and grandchildren but continue to come to Ecuador once a year for a month or two to help out. George leads visiting short-term teams in ministry and Tempy continues to offer her skills in painting, decorating, designing, and landscaping. At the retreat last month, **Tempy discovered that I enjoyed the same activities and asked me if I'd like to take over her landscaping projects while she is out of the country.** And of course, I said "yes!" This day, Tempy and I walked through the grounds of the facility and throughout all the buildings and shared with me her ideas for improving the appearance of the 80-year old facility. She'd also like me to work with the part-time Ecuadorian gardener to share ideas for changes. **She made a special point to mention that several very important people, including the President of Ecuador, come to visit the facility. We are praising God in that he has answered the prayer of one of our supporters who prayed that the Lord would somehow use my experience in gardening and landscaping!**

On Friday, October 24, **our class visited the house, art studio, and museum of the Ecuadorian artist, Oswaldo Guayasamin. This famous artist is dearly loved by the Ecuadorian people!** His paintings, murals and sculptures were created in deep love for the people of his country and their many years of struggle for independence and civil rights. He was very wealthy when he died and donated his house, property, and artwork to the government of Ecuador to be used as a museum. He is buried under a huge tree in his backyard which overlooks the city of Quito. Dozens of wind-chimes and flower containers hang from this tree. The atmosphere was very emotional as we studied the pain and struggle in the faces of the people portrayed and listened to the narrators as they explained the purpose behind each piece of artwork. **Learning their history and what they value is extremely important to our ability to build strong relationships with the Ecuadorian people.**

On the last weekend of this month, **our family and our class participated in the cultural activities of "The Day of the Dead" which is November 2.** On Friday, our class visited the cultural plaza near the Presidential Palace where we were able to view and take photos of colorful artistic displays representing the celebration of "The Day of the Dead". On Saturday, our family made "Colada Morada" a very special hot fruit drink that takes 4 hours to prepare. I do believe that there is nothing else on earth that tastes as good as this! On Sunday, after church, our class visited a famous local cemetery where hundreds of people were visiting their deceased loved ones. It is a bit similar to our Memorial Day in that families come to visit, clean up, and decorate the grave-sites. Yet there are important differences. Not all, but most of the families who visit bring meals to the grave-sites and eat usually breakfast and lunch (and sometimes supper) with their deceased loved ones. The families leave a meal for the deceased over night and return in the morning (after the poor people and the stray dogs have eaten all the food) believing that their their deceased loved ones ate the meal that was left for them. At first this seemed strange to us but after much thought and discussion, we've come to realize how much their culture has influenced this belief. To share a meal with someone, in Latin America, is of utmost importance and a symbol of bonding relationships; therefore, why not symbolically share a meal with your deceased loved ones, one day a year? It's something to think about. Even the Christians here participate in some of the festivities of this holiday because it is deeply ingrained in this culture. **We are so grateful to the Lord for these educational and memorial opportunities to learn so much more about the history, culture and the people of this country.**

Well, with the Lord's help and your prayers, we made it through the first semester of language classes! We should find out our grades this week!

Our weeks were filled with 50-75 hours per week of classes and homework. We've taken approximately 6 quizzes and 2 exams. We have studied 9 of 14 verb tenses (past, present, future, etc.), commands and expressions, read newspaper articles and wrote reports on them, made presentations, told children's stories, wrote two 2-6 page compositions, and wrote our own personal devotional and presented it to the class (all in Spanish of course).

What comes next is using what we've learned to do on paper in the form of speech (which is always the hardest part). Our minds pretty much know what to do, the problem is remembering it when you are trying to listen and to talk. This is why we, the staff of our school, and HCJB/RB made the decision for us to not complete the last 4 weeks of school in the classroom. Based on how we've done in class, we all recognized the need to not be doing so much homework at this point and to be reviewing, memorizing, and speaking what we've learned in daily life. Being that we live with 8 other Ecuadorian people this task is readily available to us each day! **We are the only students, at this time, who are living off campus and living with people who speak their language. This is such a huge blessing to us!**

We certainly won't be bored during our semester break; even now, we have cultural activities with homework to do for HCJB/RB. Please pray that with this busy schedule during break, we are able to take some time daily to replenish and refresh our marriage and our spiritual life. We now look forward to 2 ½ months during our semester break to be able to practice our Spanish, catch up on household duties, catch up on bookkeeping, update our website and add albums of wonderful photos, experience more of the culture, spend more time with our new family, get to know our neighborhood better, visit our Ecuadorian friends (many of them don't even know we've arrived yet!), and keep in touch more with you

We are not big "technology-nerfs" but we do enjoy SKYPE! We thank God for the technology to be able to talk with you face-to-face. If you do not yet have SKYPE video, please consider buying a SKYPE camera for your computer (under \$20) and download SKYPE onto your computer (for free). We'd love to have your SKYPE name and visit with you sometime! If you prefer not to obtain SKYPE, we can call your home phone from our computer for 2 cents per minute and at no cost to you! **Don't be surprised if one day your phone rings and it is us! - We'd love to hear what God is doing in your lives and pray with and/or for you!**



Darrell and Sondra Holden

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