

Dear Friend, Encourager, Partner-in-Mission,

Going Home? Or Leaving Home?

Sept 8-22, we were privileged to be able to return to Wisconsin for 13 days. Pastor Sal from our church, here in Carcelen, drove us to the airport at 4:30a.m. Our arrival at the Satterthwaite home in Plover, WI did not occur until after midnight. At times, all the craziness of the list-making, packing, preparing the house for our absence, setting up appointments, etc. reminded us of the familiarity of when we left Wisconsin for Ecuador just over one year ago. But something was very *unfamiliar* about *this* trip. **We found ourselves saying that we were “leaving home” and “going to Wisconsin.” In just one year, we have adopted Ecuador as our home. As we made the long flight to the U.S., we weren’t sure if Wisconsin would still feel like “home”.**

Trying to explain how another country and culture can become your new home in such a short time is no easy task. We had been on mission trips to Ecuador for eight days each in 2005, 2007, 2008, and 2010. We were also here for one month in 2008 and six months in 2011. So we wonder that if the long, accumulative effect of other visits has helped with the process of feeling we are “home” here. But mainly, it’s been “a God-thing”. Darrell had mentioned a few years back that he had absolutely no interest in leaving his career and going to a strange country and eating strange food. Sondra, for most of her life, had no desire to ever leave the U.S. and go to a strange place, with strange people, and a foreign language, especially if that place was within even a thousand miles of a volcano! **It is amazing what the Lord can do when He grabs your attention - - - and grabs your heart!**

Mission Impossible?

Our schedule of activities was not humanly possible. We had already cut out as many things as we possibly could and the things left simply *had* to be done! **We knew that without God and without your prayers, we never would be able to complete 15 days of activities in 13 days!** We were up and ready the first day to “get going” and made arrangements to get a loaned cellphone and vehicle to help us with the process. We began contacting people, confirming appointments, plans, and arrangements and then “plans changed”. We were informed, that first day, the place where we had been storing our personal belongings would have to change due to this family’s need to make their basement into a living space sooner than they had anticipated. So, now it’s “Plan B” - unpack our things in storage, re-sort them, re-pack them, and for the things that we need to let go of - plan for a rummage sale for this same week! For 2 ½ consecutive days we spent 34 hours, in the basement, making “tough-but-quick” decisions about the things we needed to let go of and the things we still hoped to take with us. **Plan B, although necessary, was grueling and made a huge dent in the already crazy amount of “have-to-do’s” from our “to-do” list. We also thought we had to find new places to store our things, but God provided them for us!**

Okay - If We Really 'Have-To'!

Most of the things we needed to accomplish were “have-to’s” and therefore not much fun, such as phone calls, e-mails, appointments, errands, and details to take care of with health professionals, bankers, caregivers, power-of-attorney, etc. and UGH!- the motor vehicle department! (By the way, it’s amazing that you can be gone from the U.S. only one year, and the requirements for renewing a Professional CDL

license can change. Darrell needs his U.S. license in order to obtain an Ecuadorian license, but because of the change now no longer has a school-bus license, which he won't need in Ecuador anyway.)

Well, Okay, THIS Might? Be Fun!

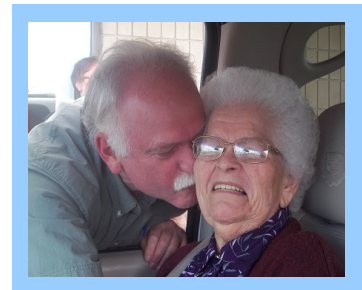
A semi-fun activity was “power-shopping.” Didn’t know the meaning of the term until we persevered through the experience of shopping from morning until night, purchasing a long list of needed items, as fast as we could move from aisle to aisle and from store to store to get the task done in a very short amount of time. **This, by the way, was NOT the fun part! The fun part was being accompanied by a friend** who was patiently driving Sondra around town and patiently waiting for her to accomplish the long list of tasks and then spending an hour with her having lunch together at Culver’s! The other enjoyable part was seeing how God provided for our tight budget by providing 10-70% off many items. Also, because it was Tuesday at Goodwill there was even a senior discount that day! By the end of 2 ½ days of “power-shopping, the “fun” stopped. Now, we had to unload it all, remove all the packaging, and try to fit it in with the things we hoped to take back with us to Ecuador!

Darrell, on one of those days, needed to drive to southern Wisconsin to deliver and pick up various personal items to either keep in long-term storage or take back with us to Ecuador. **Though he enjoys driving, he does NOT enjoy looking through boxes and totes trying to find things and packing things away. But the blessing of this trip was that it was his brother's house that he went to and visiting with family is always such a joy!**

The Important And Necessary

The main purpose our U.S. trip was that Darrell needed to have his paramedic skills checked by a U.S. professional in order to re-new his paramedic license. He’s taking several courses “on-line” which is more convenient (but unfortunately more expensive) than having to stay in the U.S. for about 30 days to complete everything. We had thought about not having him re-new his license, but Reach Beyond, our mission organization, wants him to keep up his license should they ever need him to help out in with the medical caravans. **Keeping his license up every two years is very time-consuming and expensive, but in the long-run may open other doors for ministry as God has already done with the Quito Metropolitan Fire District!**

Another necessary activity was not only getting together for a special meal with the Holden family but also to be able to converse face-to-face about the present and future care of Darrell’s mother, Donna, who is experiencing progressive dementia. We praise God that the day we visited she was “clear” about who Darrell was and very happy to see him. We also had the opportunity to visit with Donna’s part-time home health-care worker and give and receive input and ideas to help Darrell’s dad adapt to the changes in his and Donna’s lives. **TY Lord for this precious time!**



We spent two Sunday mornings at our home church of Woodlands. At 7a.m. we began setting up for our mission table in the foyer and our mission presentation given after the services. By 1p.m. one Sunday and by 3p.m. the other Sunday, we packed up our things knowing that **our time was well-spent.** We briefly touched base with many church-family/friends but also engaged in a few significant conversations where each of us were able to share recent details of our lives. For the past year, we’ve been separated by almost 7,000 miles, so the joy of seeing others face-to-face and sharing hand-shakes and embraces helps to close the “distance” between us. **A special joy was to be able to make available some hand-made items for folks to purchase (made by women who live in the Quito dump and young girls rescued from prostitution).** The generous people who bought these items contributed over \$800 to help provide funds for women and young girls who need financial assistance in improving their lives! **THANK-YOU Lord for those who contributed and for those who helped with the sales!**

Islands of Refuge in an Ocean of Chaos

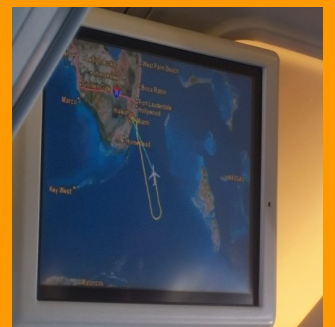
Each day began at 6-7a.m. and ended between midnight and 4a.m. We struggled to keep up the pace, got a little “snappy”, and shed a few tears (okay, Sondra did.) We had been keeping an “impossible pace” a good six weeks prior to coming to the U.S. and now we were weary. **But the Lord did provide us with a few “islands of refuge” in the midst of the craziness and for this we give Him thanks!**

Oh, how we wanted to visit with everyone! But the lack of time would not allow for this during these short 13 days. We were able to share five meals in restaurants with some very close friends and for that we are so very grateful. But for the remainder, the Zimbauer family graciously organized an open house at their home in the country for church-family to have a chance to visit with us in a relaxed atmosphere. Generous folks from our life-groups/Bible-study groups and others brought good 'ole N. American potluck dishes to share in the fellowship. We were able to enjoy great food and conversation with more than 45 people in the warm Indian-summer sun on a beautiful, clear, Wisconsin-autumn day! After most folks said their goodbyes we sat by the campfire until almost midnight sharing stories, laughing, and occasionally nodding off taking 2-minute power-naps while being mesmerized by the flames of the campfire. **TY Lord for good friends!**

Our most special day was Sunday, Sept 20th, our 29th wedding anniversary! After our final visit to Woodlands, we stole away to meet up with some friends and spent the afternoon and evening sharing lunch in a restaurant, riding bikes on the Green Circle trail, enjoying some home-made venison stew and cherry cobbler at their home and yes, another campfire! We even watched a humorous episode of “The Office” that our friend had picked out for Darrell because of its theme on emergency-preparedness. It was so good to just be in God's creation, eat great food, and share good conversation and laughter. This was the most relaxing, rejuvenating and memorable part of our trip. **TY Lord for our good friends, and the great weather and beautiful day you provided!** ----- >



Sept 21st we arose before sun-rise to pack up six suitcases. Typically we don't do things “last minute” but we had no other choice than to do it the day we were leaving. Darrell, somehow, still managed to run to two more stores to find some more things that we either can't find in Ecuador or can't buy there because of the prices. A friend drove us to the Janesville bus station and treated us to a quick dinner before putting us on the bus for Chicago (which he also paid for). As we waved good-bye, we settled into our seats and slept until we arrived in Chicago at 9p.m. Although our flight wasn't until 5a.m. we weren't able to sleep much at the airport. Later, in Miami, our transfer was nothing short of a miracle with only 45 minutes in between. The Lord provided us a Spanish-speaking employee who walked us through long hallways, elevators, escalators, and sky-trains, making it just in time! Thinking we could finally “crash” (as in “sleep”) on the 4 ½ hour flight to Quito, **35 minutes from Miami we were faced with the announcement that one of the engines was malfunctioning and we had to head back.** Based on the jerking motion that kept occurring and the fact that the Miami airport stopped all of it's incoming and outgoing flights and provided us with a caravan of firetrucks with flashing lights as we landed, we knew God had graciously helped us escape a “crash” (as in “Jesus here we come!”). Three-and-a-half hours later after changing passengers, flight crew, food service, and baggage to another plane, we finally “crashed” (as in “slept”). **Thank You Lord for the prayers of others and for Your protection!** ----- >



After arriving home and a good night's sleep, Darrell immediately returned to his office to fulfill his responsibilities in monitoring the situation with the erupting volcano and preparing the missionaries and their families for a possible explosion. **Sondra, on the other hand, stayed home for one week** to unpack six suitcases, organize spaces in our home to store everything, and catch up on recording receipts and balancing our budget after making significant purchases in the U.S. Yes, in reality, Wisconsin is our home, or at least was our home - the place where we are glad to be, sad to leave, and glad to return to. But now, just like Wisconsin, Ecuador is our home too. **We thank God that He has helped us to feel “at home” wherever He sends us!**



--> "At Home" in Quito, Ecuador !

Praising God:

- * For everyone who helped make our trip a success!
- * For physical, emotional, and mental recovery from the challenging trip!

Prayer Requests:

- * For financial recovery from the unexpected expenses from this trip and the classes Darrell needed in order to renew his license.
- * For God's wisdom for each one of Darrell's family member in concern with the present and future care of his parents.

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

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Casilla 17-17-691
Quito, Ecuador
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