

**Dear Friend, Encourager, Partner-in-Mission,**

"My Kingdom cannot be shaken! This present world seems to be shaking more and more, leaving you off-balance much of the time. As you spend time "soaking" in My Presence...gazing at Me, you gain My perspective on your life...time alone with Me is essential for unscrambling your thoughts and smoothing out the day before you...and you regain your balance". - 40 Days with Jesus - Sarah Young

**Trying to "balance" school, moving, and the purchase of furniture/household goods for our new home has definitely thrown things off-balance these past 2 months.** Despite what some people think, "missionaries" are not much different from other Christian folk when it comes to the temptations of this world. These past 2 months, we have been caught up in a whirlwind of "to-do" lists and "deadlines." We've felt the stress placed upon our physical, emotional, and spiritual lives. Who likes to admit it when you, at times, haven't been "in the Word" nor spending sufficient time with the Lord, daily - - - It's humbling. But we share this with you because we all need to learn from our own mistakes. **No matter how busy we are, we all NEED to spend time with Jesus DAILY and when we don't, something or someone always suffers (peace, health, marriage, etc.) We give thanks to Our Lord for calling our attention back to this!**

**Besides our daily busy routine** of 4 hours of language class, 1-2 hours of study/homework, and 2-4 hours of book-keeping, emails, and domestic chores, **our life was filled with various adventures during the past few weeks:**

**Ruffled Feathers and Rocky Roads**

**An HCJB/RB missionary, Sheila, offered to sell, loan, and give away some of her furniture and household items to us** while she is temporarily residing in Spain and deciding whether to move there permanently. We hired a friend of the Fire Chief to move the items from her house to the house of our family where we were living. The area where she lives has a number of neighbors who are very particular about their neighborhood, especially the trees. When Sheila saw the large truck coming down the very narrow tree-covered driveway, she became very concerned about her neighbors being anxious about the truck damaging the tree branches. Sure enough, one neighbor came out to express her displeasure about how the truck was scraping against (but not damaging) the branches. In the midst of the conversation, Darrell introduced her to Pablo, the Fire Chief. Pablo began explaining to this lady that he had been in her neighborhood before, in response to a fire. Much to our surprise, when she realized that he helped to control a fire in her neighborhood, her entire demeanor changed and she was very content to let us proceed with the truck! Later, when everything was packed up, we then had to proceed over an extremely rutty and rocky dirt road, hoping the praying all along the way that the glass top of Sheila's beautiful dining room set that she was loaning to us would not break. **Praise God, everything was intact upon arrival to our house!**

**Bad Leak? or Blessing?**

**One particular day we noticed** a puddle of water under some of our recently purchased pieces of furniture and discovered that there was **a small stream of water trailing from our family's storage area** (which is actually a bathroom that they do not use). We opened the door to discover that everything in the "bodega" was wet! All 8 family members, Darrell and I unloaded the bodega so Darrell could discover what

was the problem. He checked the sink, the toilet, the plumbing, and just could not figure out the source of the leak. Then after more investigation, he discovered that there was an internet cable running from the roof, through the bathroom, and into the living room. The other evening when it was windy and rainy, the water had collected on the wire and traveled down the wire leaving a continuous drip at the bottom! **It took the entire afternoon for 10 of us to help clean and dry the area** and then re-pack the items into dry containers and put them back into storage. **The blessing was that** the family had wanted to get at cleaning out this storage area for months and now today because everyone was worried that the plumbing had sprung a leak, every stayed around to help and **the job was accomplished in one afternoon! Also, all 10 of us, who had been very busy, benefited from some “family time” together!**

### **Patience and Opened Doors**

**Darrell was finally able to meet with officials of Carcelen Fire Dept to confirm their agreement to transport him to HCJB/RB during national emergencies!** We had strongly felt that the Lord was calling us to live in Carcelen for various reasons, but being 45 minutes away by bus could affect Darrell's timely response to the HCJB/RB facility in a national emergency.

When Darrell had attempted to “set an appointment” to discuss this topic, he soon discovered that in this culture, much patience is required. Scheduled appointments are seen as formal and impersonal whereas unscheduled informal meetings are preferred when trying to develop relationships. So, Darrell waited approximately 2 weeks to be able to ask the Corporal if the FD could assist in this way. When he finally did, the Corporal was in full agreement but said Darrell also needed to talk with the Chief. Darrell then waited another 2 weeks to be able to talk with the Chief and when he did, the Chief was in full agreement but said Darrell needed to talk with the District Captain. So Darrell, waited another 2 weeks to be able to talk with the District Captain. Darrell's meeting with the this officer went very well and he too, was in agreement but said that he, himself, would need to talk with the Major and get back to Darrell.

Meanwhile, the District Captain also asked if he could see Darrell's credentials (licenses, training, education, etc.) as both a firefighter and a paramedic because he was just curious about it. So, Darrell met with our professor and with her help, translated his resume into Spanish and presented it to him. Little to our knowledge, the District Captain was very pleased with what he saw and decided to show it to the Major! Now, the Major (who is the top official of all 21 Fire Depts. in the Metropolitan District of Quito) wants to meet Darrell! In addition, the District Captain has expressed several ideas of how Darrell can be a benefit to the departments, volunteering his time to assist them during some weekends. **In the beginning, we weren't sure if we'd ever get an answer to our inquiry, but with a little patience and some understanding of the culture, Darrell has begun to develop some solid relationships with 3 officials and several of the firefighters. We are VERY excited as we wait to see what plans God has for opening these doors!**

### **A New Definition of “Being Prepared”**

**After purchasing a good-sized refrigerator from Sheila, we, with our North-American way of thinking, naturally stocked up on food because now we had the space.** But one day in February we had a significant rain and thunderstorm which knocked out the power for about 5 hours. Power outages from lightening strikes happen often here because of the altitude (we are much closer to the lightning coming from the sky) and because most of the city operates on hydroelectric power (which is low during the drier months). In the U.S. we have the tendency to “stock-up” when we have the money and when we can take advantage of sales, but here in Ecuador the perspective of daily living is not like ours. Many people very often buy only the food that they need for that day and there is usually no more than 1 roll of toilet paper in the house. **The concept of “being prepared” is not a part of this culture. There is a relaxed attitude that what they need will somehow be there tomorrow. Some think this way because of the lack of funds to invest in “storing up”; but many think this way because they trust God that He will provide tomorrow. We have a lot to learn from these precious people.** So now, with our large refrigerator, we often find the shelves more bare than we are accustomed to seeing, but we won't have to risk losing a lot of food during the next power outage.

### **"Changing Homes" Ecuadorian Style**

Some people consider Sondra to be a "professional packer/mover". This recent move was her 25<sup>th</sup> in 62 years! No she did not have family members in the military but a first husband who changed jobs/locations 22 times in 4 years. **But this move was very different** - - our largest items were moved by a firetruck and firefighters, our medium-sized items were moved by a Pastor, and the smaller items and clothing we carried by-hand and on-foot across town. Also, cardboard boxes just don't seem to exist here. The few that come from the grocery stores are sold immediately to the recycling center. Just when we thought she had experienced every type of move, we discover a new way of doing things. We loaded up our possessions into plastic garbage bags, plastic garbage cans, and laundry baskets and as for our clothes? - - we hung them on hangers and carried them spread out across a broom handle! **We thank the Lord that there's always new way of learning to do things!**

### **I Think I'll Just Run to The Store...**

**Shopping in a city of 2.5 million people is challenging enough for a couple of country-folk from Wisconsin**, but then add the frustration of trying to find items in stores that typically do not specialize in any particular type of item, then add disorganization of the products, trying to finding addresses and directions to various shops, figuring out which bus to take (and hoping we didn't get on the wrong one), trying to compare prices when we are not familiar with the economy, and trying to do all of this in a language that is not your own! Then add the excitement of trying to carry your purchases on a crowded bus while standing, while the driver maneuvers the bus as if he is on a racetrack, while still trying to protect your purchases and your body from invasions by people who believe you are a rich "Gringo" and can afford to let them take what they want. One such little lady, who was under 5 ft tall and probably in her 60's, oh so carefully slipped her fingers into Darrell's back pocket only to discover that Darrell, who felt her attempt, quickly turned around and yelled "Hey!". She was both embarrassed and disappointed because the only thing Darrell had (or ever has) in his back pocket was his comb and some Kleenex! **We thank God for His Ever-Watchful Eye over us!**

### **In What or Whom Do I Place My Confidence?**

**Growing up, Darrell has never felt comfortable talking in front of more than a handful of people at a time.** Despite this, when he attended college and later became a Firefighter and a Paramedic, he found himself needing to conduct meetings, give presentations, and talk with civil officials. Whenever he gets in front of "a crowd" he involuntarily breaks out in a cold sweat unless he keeps his eyes down and reads from his notes. The minute he makes eye-contact his body lets him know that it doesn't like this. With God's help, he has always managed to simply "get through it". But here he is, in a ministry position, which not only requires conducting meetings, giving presentations, and talking with civil officials, but doing it in a culture that requires good eye-contact! In January, Darrell gave a 15 minute verbal introduction to the HCJB/RB staff and missionaries sharing his personal testimony, his call to missions, and his vocational background. **Praise God he "made it through it".**

**Then in March he gave his first formal 30 minute presentation on the topic of Emergency Management.** Most Christians have heard it said that "God will equip you to do His good work", but somehow we seem to think that this only means that He will give you the skills, training, and/or education to do so. But many times the Lord accomplishes His work by giving you a supernatural ability to do something that you are not skilled, trained, or educated in how to do! Darrell needed God to step in and give him His ability to look people straight in the eye and to speak with bold confidence and that is exactly what He did! I was so amazed to see my husband stand before this crowd and display God's power and goodness as he enabled Darrell to do something that he could never before do! **My first thought was "Who is this man?" and soon thereafter the following thought that came was "Who is this God?!"**

**We had originally thought Darrell would need to give his presentations and write the Emergency Plans in Spanish but in God's goodness, he will only need to present the information in English.**

Later on, he will need to compare the old and very basic policies/procedures that are written in Spanish with the ones he will write in English and then work with the Spanish speakers to re-write theirs in Spanish.

**The other position that Darrell has with HCJB/RB is Manager of Special Projects.** At present, there is only one Ecuadorian fellow, Tuti, who works in maintenance, does repairs, and works on special projects. All other help comes from part-time volunteers and visitors. Tuti can not possibly keep up with everything that needs to be done so Darrell is here to help manage, oversee, and help out with the extra work. What is interesting is that when Darrell needed some extra advice on how to repair the plumbing at our family's home he asked one of the men at HCJB/RB if they knew someone we could hire to help. Instead of recommending someone outside of the mission they asked Tuti, if in his "spare time" he could assist Darrell. So when Darrell began attending the weekly staff meetings in concern with these tasks, he discovered that he will be working with someone who he has already gotten to know and with whom he has already figured out how to communicate with! **Tuti and Darrell are thankful to God to find out that they will be a team and look forward to their future camaraderie!**

### **Islands of Rest in a Sea of Chaos**

**In the midst of chaos it is easy to lose sight of the One Who is in control.** When we take our daily focus off of The Almighty, we get caught up in stress, worry, tiredness, crankiness, busyness, mental fatigue, etc. and begin to forget that we are NOT in control of our circumstances! **When we remember to cry out to Him will He change our circumstances? or will He give us the strength and rest to endure?** Humbly, we want to share with you that without even begin aware of it (until looking back at our calendars and journals), the good Lord provided us with the means to cope by providing us with the fellowship and prayers of others! **Here are some of the ways that He provided rest for us these past 2 months:**

- \* Celebrated 1 February birthday and 4 March birthdays, including Darrell's, with our family
- \* Sondra attended the HCJB/RB Ladies Night Out Event
- \* Darrell met with Pastor Salomon (Ecuadorian Pastor) to share fellowship, prayer and encouragement
- \* Shared a meal with HCJB/RB staff in a Peruvian restaurant.
- \* Attended a bi-cultural (U.S./Ecuadorian) wedding .
- \* Celebrated "Carnaval" with costumes, water-fights, music, dancing, food in the streets
- \* On Valentine's Day slept in, received flowers from Darrell, went for walk, watched movie at home
- \* Shared a meal with fellow missionaries at the house of Dr. Steve and Dorothy Nelson  
(HCJB Missionaries for 40+ years)
- \* Shared lunch with Dr. Steve and Dorothy Nelson at a restaurant
- \* Meal and Fellowship at Scott and Jody Arnold's with visiting missionaries from Peru
- \* Darrell attended HCJB/RB Men's Retreat while Sondra spent "alone time" at home.

**We thank the Lord for those of you who have been praying for us during these 2 busy months and we thank the Lord for providing times of rest for us!**

**THE MISSIONARIES OF HCJB/REACH BEYOND HELP TO TAKE THE GOSPEL TO PLACES WHERE NOT EVEN 2% OF THE PEOPLE KNOW CHRIST.**

**Here are some of the highlights of what God has done in 2014:**

- 18 radio stations planted in Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia (100<sup>th</sup> radio plant in Asia)
- 2,000 SonSet (solar-powered) radios funded and distributed to 9 countries
- 5 medical caravans in remote areas of Ecuador
- 19 clean water projects in Latin America and Africa

**Here are some of highlights of what God is planning in 2015:**

- Five persons are receiving mentoring in Quito, Ecuador, through the Corrientes program aimed at helping to develop Latin-American missionaries.
- These 5 young people from Ecuador and Peru are planning to serve and live among the people of Ecuador and 3 Middle-East and Asian Countries.



**Darrell and Sondra Holden**

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**in Ecuador, South America**



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