

HOLDEN NEWSLETTER OCT 2020 - OCT 2021



MAIN TOPICS MAIN POINTS PRAYERS/PRAISES

- To help you find and read what interests you!

Dear Partner, Encourager, Friend,

CHANGE IN NEWSLETTER AND UPDATE SCHEDULES

Time has flown and another year has passed! Our new ministry, 'Despensa de Gracia' (DdeG or Pantry of Grace) which we founded in June of 2020 and continue to shepherd, keeps our schedule very full, with significantly less time to write.

From this point forward, we will send out the Holden Newsletter twice annually, while the Mission Updates/Prayer Requests we will send to our financial partners and prayer partners every 1-3 months.

If you wish to receive the more frequent Mission Updates/Prayer Requests, contact: dsholden.ec@gmail.com

DARRELL'S CHANGE IN MINISTRY FOCUS

Sometime within the next few months, Darrell will no longer be serving with Voz y Mano (VyM) formerly called Reach Beyond, HCJB Global, or HCJB Radio. Since VyM has become an Ecuadorian foundation/entity, the leadership has changed plus the number of missionaries and employees has greatly reduced for various reasons. **We are grateful to the Lord for the almost 7 years that he has served with them.**

Darrell will soon devote the majority of his time to our new ministry DdeG. With the growth in the ministry and the Life Groups starting up soon, his skills and services are greatly needed. In his spare-time he will be on-call to provide his services as a Crisis Consultant for VyM and will continue as a member of the liaison group with the U.S. Embassy in Ecuador. In addition, he will volunteer his home repair and maintenance skills plus paramedic services to friends and neighbors who live in our local community, in addition to our local church. **We are very excited and thankful to God as he enters this new phase of life and ministry!**

If you have any questions regarding this change, please don't hesitate to contact us: dsholden.ec@gmail.com
We'd be happy to share more details with you.

A PERSONAL SUMMARY OF OCTOBER 2020 – 2021

The story has been much the same across the globe, even in Ecuador, it was a year filled with threats of violent protests and soaring rates of violent organized crime. Ravaging floods damaged large rural areas of agriculture sending the price of food products soaring, volcanic eruptions persisted with as many as 100 explosions per day. Friends and family lost their livelihoods due to pandemic restrictions, others lost loved ones to death from COVID. Missionaries had to leave their field of service due to loss of support, and various ministries and churches closed their doors indefinitely. We all began to question whether we are losing our freedoms, and immigrants surge across borders both in the U.S. and in Ecuador. **The world was and continues to be in turmoil, writhing with the birthing pains of a New Jerusalem to come- - some wonder when will it all end? - - some look heavenward for answers.**

It's hard not to gain a new perspective on this sick and sin-filled world since the pandemic began.

Yet disease and evil have existed since Adam and Eve were created and will exist until we live in the New Jerusalem. Each generation has seen its own version of what the Last Days may look like, and each generation believes it has seen more of evil than the last. But evil has always lurked in the hearts of men since the beginning of time. All throughout history it has risen its ugly head from the depths. There have always been wars, killings, theft, persecution, etc. The Bible clearly tells the account of such things.

The Bible also clearly says that not even the Son of Man knows the time nor the day of when judgment will come, yet one cannot help but wonder whether we are approaching, are directly under, or are just a few steps past the threshold into the Last Days. **Only God knows, but He does give us signs to watch for.**

This past year, we have paid close attention to the signs, and at the very least, have become more aware that time is much shorter, each day more precious, and that we are to keep our eyes turned heavenward. When we look to the news, to politics, to the woes of the economy, etc. it is all too easy to become overwhelmed with not only conflicting information, but with worry, sadness and fear. When we look to God's Word, to His Sovereignty, to His riches, etc. we can be filled with the confidence and peace of knowing that all is not lost. The painful losses of loved ones, jobs, property, etc. is temporary. As we fight courageously for the God-given rights and freedoms of our families and for the families of others, we will receive our rewards in heaven which will be permanent and worth more than any purchased blocks of gold or silver that we might invest in, here on earth.

We are in a war and we are all soldiers, whether you are missionaries serving on a foreign field, or ministers of Christ serving others in your local neighborhoods or workplaces. Many focus on the increase of wars, battles, and violence that is occurring world-wide, and some say they fear we're headed for another civil war. **But many do not realize we are already at war, a spiritual war, a war between what is right and wrong - - not by our or society's standards, but by God's.**

This past year, we have come to realize the importance of asking for the Lord's courage to do what is right, to persevere, and the urgency of pointing others heavenward. Time is shorter than we think and it is not to be wasted. We believe it is time to 'soldier-on' until we see the Lord face-to-face.

Our prayer is that you will hear the call to battle, take up arms to march on toward heaven, and that along the way you will hear His call to help rescue your fellow man from eternal death. The time is now...before it's too late.

SUMMARY OF MINISTRY – OCTOBER 2020 - OCTOBER 2021

We have completed 7 years of ministry with 7 months of language school and 6+ years of partnership with Voz y Manos.

Over the past 7 years, one or both of us, have volunteered with Extreme Response, Pan de Vida, Dunamis, and Alma Libre serving marginalized families through local partnering organizations.

This past year, we obtained temporary, then **permanent residential VISAs, and our national I.D. cards** (cedulas). We are still U.S. citizens, but as residents of Ecuador, we enjoy some of the same benefits as do the Ecuadorian citizens.

Darrell became a member of the Liaison Group of the U.S. Embassy in Ecuador receiving and sharing first-hand critical information with other U.S. citizens and entities through channels and sources within the embassy.

Sondra took a 6-month Sabbatical to seek the Lord's will for the remainder of her personal life and ministry.

Darrell and Sondra founded and shepherd the Despensa de Gracia (Pantry of Grace) ministry which serves Venezuelan and Colombian refugees, and Ecuadorian families-in-crisis within our community.

DdeG MINISTRY 12-MONTH STATISTICS:

- *More than 75 families served with monthly deliveries of groceries, emergency food, medicines, and other emergency needs.*
- *The majority of families served are Venezuelan refugees from 11 different communities within Quito.*
- *On the average, of the 33 families we serve each month, there are: 11 seniors, 10 persons with serious illnesses, 8 single mothers, 5 persons with disabilities, and 3 families who have recently experienced significant trauma (rape of minors, unjust imprisonment, kidnapping, etc.)*
- *396 grocery sacks have been distributed*
- *240 hot lunches have been hand-delivered to workers at traffic intersections*
- *103 home visits and/or emergency home deliveries have been carried out*
- *A special Christmas outreach was conducted in December of 2020*
- *A 5-day Operation Christmas Child event was held for 61 children in July of 2021*
- *More than 150 Gospel tracts, 75 books of John, and 36 Bibles have been distributed*
- *Up to 5 Life Groups of 10+ persons are forming and will soon begin meeting in homes*
- *\$5,581.00 in donations was used for the Food Program*
- *\$2,685.00 in donations was used for Emergency Deliveries*
- *\$728.00 in donations was used for the Christmas Outreach and Evangelism materials*
- *20+ volunteers have served with the ministry; most are Latin American, including pastors from Ecuadorian, Venezuelan, Peruvian, and Chilean roots.*
- *More than 1,000 volunteer hours have been given to the ministry*
- *More than 3,120 staff hours have been given to the ministry*

A NEW PERSPECTIVE FOR THE FUTURE

Physically hungry people desire to be fed but spiritually hungry people must be fed. Our ministry's name, Despensa de Gracia, literally means 'Pantry of Grace'. We are not just a food pantry. More than a dispensary of food, we are a source and dispensary of grace, the Lord's Grace. We don't just hand out groceries, we extend our hand in a neighborly fashion. We make home visits during which we engage in meaningful conversations and prayer as well as within our telephone messages and group chats. We share information, lead families to other helpful resources, and assist and encourage them to seek, find, and move forward with meaningful employment. **We share their sorrows and their joys. We share life with them. That is what being a good neighbor entails, and Jesus knew that. He invested in people's lives in order to gain their trust and attention so that their hearts would be open to His message.**

More than ever, we see the importance of reaching not just more families, but to reach the depths of the hearts of the families that we already serve. Our focus this next year will be on the Life Groups so that these families can share life's joys and sorrows with people from their own culture, learn to depend on one another, form strong communities, pray with one another, and encourage one another each step along the way.

Time is short! People need to hear God's Word, especially from the lips of their own people!

Please join us in prayer as we prepare for the start-up of the Life Groups!

Also, please prayerfully consider joining us as financial partners so that we will have the resources and materials needed to not only feed the new families who are physically hungry, but to also carry out the proper formation of these groups.

Our goal is to provide the training needed to disciple new leaders so that, within the homes of these families, new groups will form and God's Kingdom will be expanded!

GIVE IN 1 OF 2 WAYS TO SUPPORT THE MINISTRY...

1) Give via Ripe for Harvest –

<https://ripeforharvest.givingfuel.com/donate-specific?staffId=20099>

(This method is tax deductible BUT does involve fees up to 15%)

2) Write a check to DARRELL/SONDRA HOLDEN

Mail to Tina Bush, 6031 Ashbury Dr, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54499

Tina will sign and deposit the check into our special debit account for the ministry

IMPORTANT: WRITE 'PANTRY' IN YOUR CHECK MEMO

(This method is not tax deductible BUT does not involve fees)



PANTRY OF GRACE

*...in your generosity, oh God,
you provide for the poor.*

Psalm 68:10

**THANK YOU FOR HELPING
TO EXTEND HIS GRACE
TO THOSE WHO NEED IT THE MOST!**

PERSONAL PRAISES:

For the Lord's protection over our health this past year.

For an amazing, restful 5-day vacation in northern Wisconsin during our recent 5-week HMA (Home Mission Assignment) in the U.S.

For time spent with friends and family in the U.S.

For the 2 retreat centers and 3 families who opened up their facilities and homes to us and the 3 families who made their vehicles available to us during our stay.

For our amazing spiritual mentors, missionary-care persons, financial supporters, prayer partners, and stateside churches who pray for us and support us in the work God has called us to do.

For the mission agency staff of Ripe for Harvest and our Latin American Field Director.

For the almost 7 years we served with Voz y Manos

For Tina Bush, our stateside assistant and Power of Attorney who has an amazing servant's heart

PERSONAL PRAYERS:

For trust and confidence in the Lord as Darrell adapts to a new ministry focus.

For wisdom and discernment as we follow the Lord's lead in serving refugees and families-in-crisis.

For the financial resources and volunteer manpower needed to carry out the duties of the ministry.

For the Lord's protection as we face newer and larger threats to our security living in Ecuador.

For wisdom and safety during times of travel and during close encounters with the people we serve.

For continued health and stamina to carry out the physical responsibilities needed to serve.

For times of spiritual and marital refreshment and renewal, in rural areas, outside of the city.

For the Lord's courage to always stand with conviction for what is right in His eyes.

For additional financial support (see below) because the price of everything has risen so much!

DARRELL AND SONDRA HOLDEN



MISSIONARIES
OF



FOUNDERS
AND
SHEPHERDS OF



SUPPORT US AT:

www.ripeforharvest.org

LEARN MORE AT:

www.ReachBeyondTheMountains.com

CONTACT US AT:

dsholden.ec@gmail.com

WhatsApp (D) +53 099 752 2446

WhatsApp (S) +53 099 908 2264

* SEND CARDS / LETTERS TO BE SCANNED AND EMAILED TO US:

Holden, c/o Tina Bush, 6031 Ashbury Drive, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494

* CONTACT US TO FIND OUT WHO IS TRAVELING TO ECUADOR

Send your card / letter / package to their address to be hand-deliver to us upon their arrival

To Our Current Partners (and to Future Partners Whom We Trust the Lord will Send to Us),

As you know, prices are sky-rocketing all around the world; Ecuador is no exception. The prices of groceries, personal items, public transportation, even utilities have risen tremendously. Because Darrell will be leaving Voz y Manos, his \$80/month phone plan will no longer be covered by the mission. Also, our health care coverage expenses have increased by \$800 per year. Praise God, thus far, the amount of our rent has not changed.

Many of you have been financially supporting us for a number of years. Your gifts have been generous and consistent. Some of you have increased the amount of your gifts on your own accord without us asking you. You have been faithful to the Lord and we very grateful to you. **Others of you may now be prayerfully considering whether or not to join us as financial partners. No matter who you are, we pray that Lord lead you in this decision and that your hearts will be generous.**

While in the U.S. we had a conversation with our home church and praise be to God, they intend to increase our quarterly support. We do not know yet how much, only that they said they can increase it a portion of what we asked.

For the past 7 years, we have been living on \$1,684.39 net per month, and from this we pay our tithes and offerings. **With our current support and with Sondra's social security checks, we are not able to cover our current monthly expenses.**

In 2 1/2 more years, Darrell will reach retirement age and be able to collect his social security (God willing it will still be there). We do not any plan to retire but, if the Lord wills it, we will continue serving the Lord here in Ecuador. With Darrell's social security checks, our expenses should be fully covered and life should be a bit easier.

Until Darrell receives his social security in 2 ½ more years, we are in need of \$250 more monthly, but \$500 more monthly would help tremendously. We are extremely grateful that a portion of that will be provided by our home church.

Please be in prayer as to whether the Lord may be leading you to either join us as a new financial partner, or to increase your present giving. Any amount will help but we pray that your hearts will be filled with generosity.

Thank you for hearing our hearts and for prayerfully considering our need.

You may give periodic/monthly/quarterly/annual gifts via Ripe for Harvest using the following link:

<https://ripeforharvest.givingfuel.com/donate-specific?staffId=20319>

Dios Le Pague Generosamente! (May God Generously Repay You!)

Darrell and Sondra Holden