



Holden Newsletter - Aug 2017

We hope the following **highlights** will help you **find and read** what interests you!



MAIN TOPICS

MAIN POINTS



PRAYER REQUESTS / PRAISES



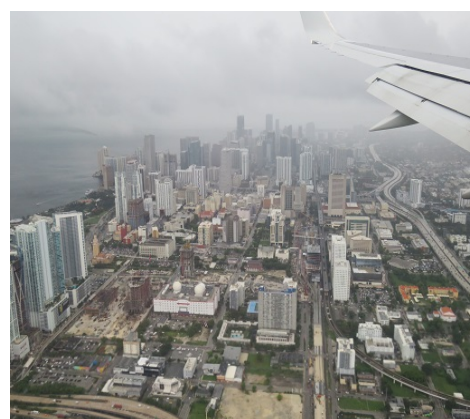
Dear Friend, Encourager, Partner-in-Mission,



Leaving Ecuador



Changing Hemispheres



Miami - then on to Chicago

OUR FIRST 48 HOURS IN THE U.S.A.

After a 21-hour day of travel, we were greeted at the O'Hare airport by a fellow church member and taken out to supper at Cracker Barrel. We ordered many of our favorite foods that we cannot get or cannot afford to purchase in Ecuador. What a treat!

After a good night's sleep we met with some friends to pick up our toiletry items, office supplies, and clothes that we had stored at their houses. We had only packed 2-3 outfits each because we needed the space to bring the Ecuador and ministry items we were going to sell and our gifts for family, friends, and supporters. We then unpacked everything and settled into our first 'home'.

The following day we organized our sale items, gifts, and presentation items. We also calculated the inventory for ordering a year's worth of natural medicines and supplements to take back with us.

JAPANESE FRIENDS FROM MEXICO?

Years ago, Kaori came to live with us for six months while completing her 2-yr. ESL course-work abroad at the local university. She became like family to us and us with her. A few years later, she and her parents invited us to her wedding (held in California although they lived in Japan). It was immediate family only - and we were included. Since that time we've kept in touch via email. About one year ago, her husband, who works for Nissan was transferred to Mexico to fill in temporarily for someone who had suddenly left his position. When she discovered that we would be in the U.S. she decided to travel up from Mexico to visit.

Asking folks to house us is difficult enough but asking if they can also house our guests for four days is stretching the rules of etiquette a bit.



The first home in which we were staying did not have room for us plus Kaori and her two children. We were not comfortable with the idea of asking someone else to house her without us staying in the same home. Perhaps she would have to stay in a hotel. **But an inner voice seemed to say, "Trust Me in this."** Assuming it was the Holy Spirit, we sent out an email. Within 24 hours someone answered! We later found out that two different families from church (one now living in Georgia) had contacted this family of seven who had recently moved to Wisconsin from Japan. **God not only provided a home but a family with whom our guests could share the same culture and language!**



Movie/Craft Night



On a Swing at Schmeekle Reserve

For the next four days, we took Kaori around town to visit our church, the university she attended, our old home where she lived with us, our new home we bought and sold since that time, spent time at the local parks, and of course ate ice cream at Belt's and Culver's! **We also had our language abilities stretched** as we attempted to communicate with her children who knew mostly Japanese, little English, but thankfully knew some Spanish from living in Mexico for the past year!

GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS



Sales Event of Ecuador Items

We packed up again and moved into our second 'home' and then worked four 10-hour days preparing for our presentations. For the next two Sundays we would be at churches, setting up/tearing down, visiting with people in the foyer, presenting our mission, and answering questions. We set up several tables with hand-crafted items from Ecuador with the proceeds supporting those we minister to. We displayed Adopt-A-Child Thru Prayer photos/stories of 36 kids whose parents work in the trash-dump.



Adopt-A-Child Thru Prayer

RE-VISITING CHURCH MINISTRIES

We were also blessed to attend and/or help out with a few church ministry events. While Sondra re-connected with women at a Women's Event Night, Darrell helped out our former small group leader who was cooking food for the 150 women who attended the event. On another evening, Darrell was not only able to help out at a Men's Night Event but also enjoyed grilled steak and conversation with his Christian brothers. And, together, we attended a church picnic and baptism enjoying good fellowship with others.

RE-SALE, RECYCLE, RE-PACK

Living in a foreign country presents many challenges, one of which is shopping. Darrell is a big man; Ecuadorian men typically are not. Therefore, it is nearly impossible to find clothing which fits him so we must shop for him while we are in the U.S. Sondra, on the other hand, who is able to find her sizes, typically shops at re-sale stores and garage sales which are almost non-existent in Ecuador.

During this trip to Wisconsin we needed to do some serious shopping, not only for clothes, but household, personal, and office items that we cannot find or cannot afford the price of in Ecuador. So we spent a total of six days visiting every re-sale shop we could find in three cities, two hardware stores, and various discount stores looking for a long list of items we needed.

But before we could shop, we needed to inventory what items we may have already had in storage. **Then after the shopping spree** we need to take everything out of the packaging to make the best use of room in our suitcases. And, of course, if it fits that doesn't necessarily mean that it won't be overweight for the airline restrictions. So **we always anticipate that** we'll have to pack, re-adjust, re-pack, re-adjust, again and again.

UNEXPECTED SORROWS

Three months before moving to Ecuador we sold our home, our son unexpectedly passed away, and we moved into the home of the Miller family in Wautoma. Jerry and Darrell knew each other from former days in paramedic school. And he and his wife attended a church of the same denomination as ours. They welcomed us into the furnished apartment in their basement and encouraged us as we grieved the loss of our son. **Then this year, during the third week of August we received sad news.** Jerry had been killed in a car accident. We could not believe what we heard. The same family that sheltered us physically and covered us in prayer would now need to be comforted by us. So we drove to Wautoma to attend the funeral and church meal and then later visited with Patty and her family over a meal at a restaurant. We praise God that Jerry knew Jesus as Savior and Lord. And we are happy to know that we'll see him again.

SWEET RELIEF

All work and no play is never a good thing. In between the appointments and responsibilities written on the pages of our calendar this month were also notes of sweet times with friends and family. We were blessed with small windows of time during which we could visit our former neighbors, be treated to restaurant meals with friends, sing along with karaoke, hear a live variety band and dance together, sit by a campfire, watch some fireworks, and enjoy meals in the homes of others.

The most memorable time this month was our visit with Darrell's mother in the Memory Care Center. Donna, who has progressive dementia, had been living at home with her husband until just a few weeks before we left Ecuador. Her husband had been trying to care for her the best he could for a few years now. But he and the family recently came to realize that it was time for her to be cared for by professionals. We prayed that Donna would have a 'good memory day' when we visited her and the Lord truly answered our prayers. She seemed to not only recognize us, but spoke of things which clearly indicated that she was remembering things from her past and its connection with ours. **We were so happy to visit with her, bring her a gift from Ecuador, and receive her hugs. We've been blessed by all of Darrell's family and relatives who have taken such good care of her while we've been away.**



JOIN US IN PRAISING GOD:

- 1) For our safe flight to the U.S. despite significant turbulence when approaching Miami.
- 2) For safe travel for Kaori and her children from and back to Mexico.
- 3) For the families who provided us with housing, meals, vehicles, phone and minutes in August.
- 4) For family and friends who provided us with relaxing respites from our busy schedule.
- 5) For the great items and sales we discovered while shopping.
- 6) For the sale of the Ecuador items which financially benefits those we minister to.
- 7) For a memorable day with Darrell's mother.

Darrell and Sondra Holden

Missionaries of -



Partnering with -



in Ecuador, South America

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