



Holden Newsletter - July 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,

SHOWING UP AND SHOWING OFF

During the course of our faith-walk as Christians, we've come to realize that the Lord's timing is often, not the same as ours. In our minds we create timelines of when we think certain things should occur. But time and time again the Lord shows us that "His ways are not our ways."

Each time we go to the U.S. we no longer have a house to go home to. Instead we must rely on others to provide housing, meals, etc. for us. It's a humbling experience - yet biblical. Jesus nor his disciples had houses to go home to. Sure, they used to, but they left their homes, their families, their occupations, their possessions to be obedient to the will of the Father - to go and make disciples of all nations. And so, we, like other missionaries, do the same.

So when we plan to visit our home country, we write letters explaining our needs, we pray, and we wait. Weeks go by, and we don't hear from anyone, and then, at the last minute (or so it seems), God shows up and shows off by sliding into home plate in a manner so that everyone applauds Him and not any efforts of our own. **On July 16, just 14 days before our scheduled flight, the last of our needs for housing, meals, vehicles, and a cellphone were met. Not just one home was offered but nine! Not just one vehicle to drive but four! And not just a loaned cellphone but free minutes! Yes, we must humble ourselves and make our needs known, but it is the Lord who moves hearts to respond and receives all the Glory He deserves.**

NEVER SAY 'ADIOS'

It is always difficult to say good-bye, therefore, the Ecuadorians typically do not say it. Instead of saying "Adios" they say "Hasta luego" meaning 'until later' or 'until we see you again'. There were many with whom we needed to give this salutation before leaving Ecuador - our 'family' (Carmen's family), our pastor and his family, our neighbors, and many of our friends.

Our friend, Monica (an Ecuadorian English teacher) came to visit the last Saturday before our departure to spend the entire day with us knowing she would not see us for the next three-four months.

Pablo (Darrell's firefighter friend) and his family stopped by one evening to share beverages and food and fellowship wishing us well during our time away, asking us to return soon.

Gary and Mary (Reach Beyond missionaries) invited us for dinner in their home and we were joined by Lee (another RB missionary) and Paulina (his new Ecuadorian bride).

Verito, Carmen's daughter, (a single mother) and Sondra spent an evening out together, without the four children, at a local pizza restaurant, then went for a long stroll home enjoying 'girl-talk' and the warm evening under the starry sky.

One memorable 'good-bye' was when **Mariana (our landlady), and Carmen and Verito,** together, planned a surprise 'despedida' (going away party) for us in our landlady's apartment the same evening that we were invited to another home for a dinner. Keeping with Ecuadorian etiquette, we needed to attend the surprise party, then telephone the second party to let them know we would be late for dinner (1 ½ hours late!) and then graciously fill our bellies with two full meals !



Isaias-Verito-Alyson-Carmen-Hernan-Mariana-Darrell-Beli

Carmen and Verito threw another 'despedida' for us, this time in their home, combining it with a surprise birthday party for **Jhoan Gabriel**, our sponsor daughter (**Wendy**)'s 5 year old son. They knew his birthday was the day before our flight and that we didn't have the time nor energy to prepare for a party in our home. So we supplied the cake, soda, and snacks and they prepared a full meal, presents, and spoke a blessing over him explaining to him why Jesus loves him so much.



Patricia-Sondra-Darrell-Wendy-Jhoan-David



Beli-Sondra-Darrell-Isaias-Carmen-Verito-Jhoan-Nico

Our indigenous friends, Rosita and Patricio, and their son, Estefan came over to watch the end of the 'Gospel of John' film with us, bringing flowers, sharing a meal, and offering to check on our home for us while we will be in the U.S.



And there were the **children at the Artisan Market** (where we bought items to sell in the U.S.) who hung out with us as we did our last-minute shopping, reminding us of the reason why we are to return to this country - our love for the people and our desire that they know, love, and serve Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

THE FINISHING TOUCH

Preparing for HMA (Home Mission Assignment or furlough) is not easy task. It takes weeks of planning, preparing, and packing). There are presentations to write, visuals/photos/videos to prepare, people to contact, forms and papers to read and sign, a pre-HMA interview with our mission staff, the training of others to do our jobs while we're gone, arrangements for someone to check on the apartment/water the plants/pay rent and utilities, and a thorough housecleaning to do including emptying the refrigerator, etc.

In addition to the already long list of 'must-do's our landlady asked us for a special favor just days before we were to leave. Mariana is an older widow with declining health and a nervousness about living alone. She has come to rely on us to keep watch over her building and the neighborhood (in which we live). Because we would be gone for longer than she is comfortable with she asked if Darrell would install a cable from the alarm in our apartment and install one in hers. Not really having enough time for this project, Darrell called upon his friend, Pablo, to help. We were so thankful for a good friend to help out on short-notice. **In appreciation for our help, she gave Sondra her old Ecuadorian coin collection. In this culture, one must repay a favor with another kind gesture or something of value.**

Also, just a few days before leaving, our 'Ripe for Harvest' (our base mission agency) field director came to visit. Pastor Joe serves with his wife and 11 (yes eleven!) children in Cochabamba, Bolivia. This is the first time we had met him. He and his 15 year old daughter spent two full days with us visiting our ministries, meeting our staff, listening to our God-stories, seeing cultural sites, and encouraging us by sharing from his experience and wisdom on the mission field. **His visit seemed to put the finishing touch of reassurance we needed as we prepared to visit our home country of the U.S.**



*Darrell-Joe's Daughter-Sondra
touring HCJB's Radio Studio
during a live broadcast
from Quito, Ecuador*



*Sondra - Pastor Joe - Darrell - Joe's Daughter
visiting 13 preschoolers
at Extreme Response's Development Center.
The mothers and fathers
of these 13 precious little ones
are some of the parents who work
in the Zambiza Dump
or as recyclers on the streets of Quito.*



LEAVING HOME ? OR GOING HOME ?

Changing countries, cultures, climates, and languages can be quite confusing. Human nature is to avoid change and remain comfortable in situations with which we are accustomed. It has taken three years for us to feel truly adapted to living in Ecuador and now, we will be throwing ourselves into a huge change again.

You might think that we would feel more 'at home' in the U.S. but we don't. And the longer we live in Ecuador, the less and less our old country feels like 'home'. We anticipate that because our HMA will be at least three months long, that our systems will somewhat adapt to 'the old ways' in which we lived. Then, no sooner will we begin to feel settled in, and it will be time to return to Ecuador.

Now throw in a third climate and culture and it becomes even more challenging! In the middle of our stay in Wisconsin, we'll be going to California for 4-8 weeks! And surely when we return to Wisconsin in November we will be adapting again - this time to the cold and possibly snow. Then in December, we'll be leaving the frozen tundra for temperate Ecuador and start the adaptation process all over again.

Jesus sets the standard of how we are to adjust and adapt our lives as he traveled outside of His familiar surroundings and reached out to others in varying situations. Like Him, we strive to be understanding of the differences between people and places. But sometimes it's hard.

We hope you will extend us grace

if we seem 'out of sorts' in our new environment while in the U.S.

PLEASE keep us in your prayers!

Darrell and Sondra Holden

Missionaries of -



Partnering with -



in Ecuador, South America

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