

Rich & Ramona Wagner
It's Snowing! Sort of . . .
August 14, 2008

Dear Praying Friends,

Greetings from Wintery Cusco Peru! Sooner or later we hope we will get used to the weather here. It gets down to freezing at night, sometimes with sleet and hail. Then during the day it gets up into the 80s. No matter how you dress, it turns out wrong for that day.

We have had to move our Friday night evangelism trip into buildings. It's just too cold to show the two-hour Jesus Film outside right now. We have been in community buildings, a library and many big storage buildings. We always go into the villages cold, no pun intended, and rely on God to open the doors for ministry. Only one time since we started this Friday night ministry last January have we been turned away from a village. God has always provided everything we have needed to show the alcoholism, worms, tooth brushing and Jesus Films in Quechua, and to provide opportunities for the Evangelistic Team to share the Gospel.

We have just completed three weeks of evangelistic medical brigades. First PCA Chattanooga started us out in a town north of Cusco called Pisac. They then went up into the mountains and based their medical work out of a school in a community called Quello Quello. We were able to visit four different schools and screen the children for obvious infections and give them worm medicine.

I was asked to do a one-hour radio show in Pisac to explain what all the excitement was with the visiting American doctors and nurses who weren't tourists. I got to explain about Mission to the World's work around the world and then about our Hinterlands ministry in Peru. First PCA Chattanooga's mission work spans the world so I answered many questions about why they do what they do. God led the flow of the conversation from worldwide missions to my personal relationship with our Lord and a presentation of the Gospel.

We staged that medical brigade out of a very nice Baptist facility in Pisac. I've been asked to return to do the radio show again, and the Baptists liked our medical brigade so well that they want us to help them stage medical brigades in the mountains above their facility. I'm not sure where all of this will go, but at the very least it is opening up new areas of ministry.

One major blessing that came out of this medical brigade was Rosita. I was working with a very nice young lady, I think her official title is Nurse Practitioner, but her name was Dawn so she very good-naturedly ended being called Doctor Dawn or Delta Dawn. She is young enough to not really understand the "Delta Dawn" reference, but she was a very sharp medical professional.

Rosita made it past the first level of triage and ended up with Dawn and I. Without getting into details, Grandma Ramona had to take over for me in working with Dawn and the 12 year old little girl that afternoon. You don't want to get in Ramona's way when she changes into her "protect the child" persona. The Josefine House, our orphanage/refuge for children in crisis, has now ended up with indefinite legal custody of Rosita. Please pray for this child. She has been badly damaged physically and emotionally, and it will take a lot of time and love for her to be able to deal with her past.

In dealing with the local district attorney about Rosita, the local government became aware of our newly licensed orphanage/refuge for children in crisis and immediately offered us four children from one family. We have just finished assembling beds for them and expect the police to bring them us any time now.

The second medical group that came down worked west of Cusco in several small villages. Some of them we visited a few months back with medical brigades, some were new. The group that organized the trip is Christian Emergency Relief Teams International. (C.E.R.T) <http://www.certinternational.org/> Their group was very well organized and made up of very dedicated medical and support people.

Part of their trip was to install water purification systems in four small villages. We (MTW Peru) had also purchased four systems to be used in disaster relief and to provide clean drinking water to some rural schools.

Five of the eight water systems were confiscated in Lima by Customs. We will get them back but it will take time and paperwork to do it. People from a poor Quechua pastor to the Peruvian Ambassador to the US are involved in the process, but God is in control. Please pray that these systems will be quickly released so that they can be installed and used to provide clean drinking water to the poorest of the poor here.

The three systems that did make it here were all configured for our disaster relief/school work. We kept one and reconfigured the other two so that they could be installed in the villages, and also so that local people could be trained in their instillation and maintenance. There was really no reason for us to not work this problem together. (MTW & C.E.R.T) Hungry, sick people don't care about hearing the Gospel, they want to have food and be healthy.

And speaking of food, we now have a guinea pig population of over 40. We are ready to build cages and put one male and 3-4 females in some remote locations. The purpose is community development, providing protein to a poor family's diet that is made up of mostly corn and potatoes. (Mix, ferment & drink and you see why there is an alcoholism problem here)

We have also just harvested the first honey from our two beehives. The good news is that we harvested over six gallons of usable honey. The bad news was the kitchen. I'm pretty sure Ramona will never process raw honeycombs inside the house ever again.

There was honey all over the walls, cabinets & floor. Three weeks later there are still sticky places on the floor and a glob of dried honey on the ceiling. We'll do better next time. But we were able to distribute the honey to needy families and our orphanage.

A totally unexpected surprise at the second medical brigade was the old man whose leg ulcer you see me treating on our PhotoBucket page. The consensus from the medical personnel last May was that he would be dead by now. He was an alcoholic and it looked like gangrene was starting to set in on his leg. We had left him with dressings and antibiotics and very clear directions about the wound and his drinking problem. Quechua pastors promised to visit him regularly.

He showed up at last week's medical brigade asking to be treated again. He had stopped drinking and his leg was actually healing with no sign of gangrene. I cleaned him up again and he was given more antibiotics. He is very old, can't see because of cataracts, and his body is beat up from a lifetime of alcohol. But his leg is healing, he isn't drinking, and he is involved with local Christians. God never ceases to amaze me.

Pray for this old man, I don't even remember his name, we saw over 1100 people in 8 working days, but God is doing something in his life.

Pray for Ramona as she is involved in working with young women and the children in the Josefine House. She is also teaching a young lady how to make her wedding dress.

Please also pray for me. In addition to the seminary class that I teach on Thursday nights, I have decided that I need to preach a series of sermons every Sunday in September. Don't waste your emails, I'm the first to admit preaching isn't one of my better gifts, but I need to do it. The Team sees a huge lack of knowledge and teaching in the local church about who we are as Presbyterians.

Thank you for your continued prayer and financial support. New pictures are on PhotoBucket:

<http://s227.photobucket.com/albums/dd146/WagnersinPeru/>

Lord Bless,

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