

Aprendiendo en Arequipa

(Learning in Arequipa)

November 2005

As the snow is almost completely melted from El Misti (a volcano here in Arequipa) indicating more that spring is settling in, I am finishing my 3rd complete month in language school. It is hard for me to believe that I have been in Peru now for over 3 months. What a time it has been so far! I am blessed to be learning Spanish in the same country that I am serving in; so not only am I a student of the language, but of the culture as well.

My transition has had its shares of high and low times. From trying to communicate in the market, with taxi drivers, with my host family; understanding that it is ok to be late to everything (except class!), and thus getting ready for things at the time it is supposed to begin; building up my immune system in ways I never wanted; coming face to face with spiritual warfare; and many of my days consisting of the highest and lowest of emotions.



The experience I have had in the past few months I sure wouldn't trade in for anything in the world, but I wouldn't necessarily stand in line for them either. It hasn't always been the easiest of times. Throughout support raising I learned a dependence on God that I hadn't before in my life. However being here in Southern Peru, away from my family and friends back home, away from my team in Lima, and often being around people and new friends yet feeling so alone at the same time, I have learned a different type of dependence on the Lord. Not only is He my Provider, my Protector, and my Redeemer, but He has also become my Companion. I can't imagine making this transition without Him! He has filled me with joy and humor, which I try to use to make the most out of my time here, and laugh at myself at my many mistakes in the language learning process.



I find that I am falling in love with Peru. I remember after my first short trip here and returning to the states, I felt like I left my heart here. This feels like it is a new relationship budding: *Peru and I*. Each day I feel a bit more comfortable with how things are different and unexpected, yet other things are similar and predictable. Then there are frustrating days that it seems that I don't understand anything at all! Yet I am able to communicate more as each week moves on, and I am thoroughly enjoying my classes. I look forward to being able to express ideas and emotions, and more of what I am called to share with the people that I meet. There are days that it is hard to believe that this is really what God wants for my life right now because to have this opportunity is better than anything I could have planned for myself!

A Few Changes

Sometimes things don't go as originally planned: it has been decided that I won't have an internship with the Hinterlands Health Ministry in Cusco prior to starting a health ministry in Lima. When I finish language school in January, the plan is for me to go straight on to Lima and assess the different areas of our ministry there, primarily with the church in Huaycan, where the Cristo Salvador project for impoverished children is located. Please pray with me about the development of this ministry and the Lord's guidance and wisdom.

PRAISE

- ◆ I have in my possession both forms of ID that I need to live and work here in Peru (my visa and carnet).
- ◆ New friends in Peru; both Peruvians and missionaries from different organizations
- ◆ God's provision of prayer and financial support: the 6 churches and 90 individuals who have and/or are supporting God's work through me!

Prayer

- ◆ Language school: understanding, application, pronunciation; that I will make this language my own
- ◆ Safety and health
- ◆ For my parents right now in the midst of a transition
- ◆ For my first holiday season away from family, friends, and the customs I am used to
- ◆ God's guidance in developing a health ministry in Lima: what it will look like, what I will be doing, those who will be involved, etc.
- ◆ The ministry of the Lima New City team; the health, unity, leadership, and direction of the team
- ◆ The provision of support for Mark and Lori Berry (team leader), Jeremy and Amanda Ross, Laura Hoyt, Susan Crenshaw, and Jim and Sara Ward who are going to Lima, Peru
- ◆ Wisdom and guidance in pursuit of ministry opportunities for team members that are back in the States: Frank & Suzanne Matthews & Andrew Halbert

A Reminder of the Need

November 1st was a holiday that Peru and other countries celebrate: El Dia de Los Santos (All Saints Day) and El Dia de Los Muertos (The Day of the Dead). Most of the customs on this day come from the heavy catholic influence and other traditions that different parts of the country have. In my curiosity I went to several cemeteries to view how Peru celebrates this day. In some of the cemeteries there were places that it was hard to even walk for the crowds of people. It is normal for the whole family to bring various things to the gravesite: the normal gift of flowers, beer, a band to play the favorite song of the deceased, and a plate of the most favored meal of the deceased. Priests were walking around to offer prayers to the deceased if people so wished.

I saw people without hope. I then found confirmation of this when I saw a sign in a mass being held at one of the cemeteries that when translated says: "Pay here for the souls of your deceased in purgatory." You can receive a certificate afterwards to prove that you have paid for this.

*The people here need to hear about a **FREE** gift of salvation, of a **God of grace**, and of the **hope** that can be had. Please pray with me for the people of Peru and God to use me in spite of me.*

I could not be here without your prayers, support, and encouragement. Your prayers especially have carried me throughout this time. My gratefulness is more than words can express. I thank God for you!

In His Grace,
Becca Bennett

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New Blog Website!! Read more about my time here in Peru!

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