



Harvest Time



Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest. John

Dear Church Family and Friends,

Belated greetings from hot and arid Peru! This holiday season was a most special one for the Steffler family, as it was our first spent on the mission field. As many of you recall, last Thanksgiving and Christmas were spent in the hospital and subsequent recovery from Charlie's encephalitis. God has so miraculously spared his life and graciously allowed us to return to work here in Arequipa, Peru where the fields are so white unto harvest.

Harvest Report

Our passion for the Bible studies has been the most incredible joy ever for us. Both of these works (in our home and also at the annex assigned to us by our senior missionary, Ronnie Mask) are prospering and growing beyond our capacity to keep up with them. We are so honored to have the Lord's mighty hand upon these works--for we so need His help as we tend to a flock with desperate marital, financial, and diverse social problems, as you can imagine in such an impoverished and poorly educated area. This kind of ministry is what we consider to be the real rubber-meets-the-road kind of ministry that we have been called to do. You all know our hearts on that issue.

Ciudad de Dios. This annex is exploding with growth and results. During the months of November and December we averaged over 120 in attendance (we meet every Tuesday and Thursday evenings and bus them to church each Sunday morning). Each week at least 20 souls give their hearts to Jesus and, although we have just moved to a new locale only four short months ago to accommodate the new growth, we are now bursting at the seams and in desperate need of a larger place. We peaked at over 200 by Christmas. This is the "good" kind of problem we are dealing with as the Lord gives incredible increase to the harvest.



Pachacutec. Our home Bible study has grown in just three short months to 50 in attendance. We started in a small wash room on the back side of our house with room to seat 15. We now meet in our carport to handle the larger crowd, and we are looking to expand even more during the summer months ahead. We are very excited about the endless possibilities to change our own neighborhood.



A view of our carport full of people hungry for the gospel truth.

This is Raquel.

She and her Mom were the first ones to come to our Pachacutec Bible



study. Raquel accepted Jesus the second time she came. Within a few weeks, her mom came to us pleading for prayers for her marriage and her family. She and her husband were separated with great animosity on the parts of both sets of parents. The two families live only about 3 houses apart from each other on our street. We hadn't lived here long before we learned that these families were known for their wild living and hostile ways. We prayed and counseled with this young Christian woman, and felt strongly that God had a plan to bring peace. Today Raquel's parents are reunited and both living for the Lord, one of her aunts and one grandmother have received Christ, and her grandmother brings half the kids on the block to every service and plans to help with VBS. What a testimony is unfolding right before our eyes! If this family (both sides) can become dedicated to the Lord and lay aside their animosities, all of Pachacutec will recognize the awesome power of God. They're already talking! Please pray for Raquel and her family. She was a great instrument in getting her father and grandmother to come and commit their lives to the Lord. If they forget, she tells them, "It's time for church!" **We love Raquel!**

Keep reading . . .



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Sunday School Class

We have been teaching the 7-year-olds Sunday School Class, and we usually have from 25 to 30 kids. Since so many of these children come from desperately poor areas, one of the dear couples in our church had a vision to be able to provide Christmas gifts to the poor. They donated a pig for a huge barbecue with Christian bands and numerous fundraising events; the whole church pitched in and worked to raise enough money to provide Christmas gifts for our Sunday School kids. It was quite something! Needless to say, kids began to flock in to Sunday School. Are you ready? On Dec. 23rd, we had 68 in our Sunday School class and nearly 900 in Sunday morning attendance. Yes, it was wall-to-wall kids and quite a challenge. We are praying that we will be able to win these kids for the Lord. They have been touched in a very tangible way by Christ's love, and that will not return void. We

we were also so blessed that this whole event was initiated by one of our Peruvian couples. What a blessing!



Colegio Samuel



Sharon's students (kindergarten on left; 2nd grade below)



The official school year is over for Sharon and her duties as English teacher and department coordinator. Many of you know that she had a tremendous load this year, assuming the additional responsibilities of another missionary associate who had to leave early. It has been a challenge--leaving little time for communication. Just imagine all the bustle of the holidays at the SAME TIME as the end of the school

year! It has, however, been an extremely rewarding time for the school. Numerous families have accepted Christ and become part of the church body, marriages have been restored, and our students are maturing in the things of God. We are especially proud of our choir, which Charlie initiated in October. On Dec. 22nd they participated in a Christmas competition in the Plaza de Americas where they took 2nd place. Unbeknownst to us, the performance was taped, and as we were leaving the plaza, we heard our choir singing, "Happy Birthday, Jesus!" It just brought tears to our eyes. Here we were in Peru, with our songs to the Savior drifting through the Plaza de Americas. Oh, how we hope the precious lives of those children will be strong and anointed for the Lord. **Please pray for the elementary school over the summer months ahead** (Jan. - Mar.) as there are many changes on the horizon and much work to be done.



Women's Ministry

Ministering and teaching in the Friday evening women's meetings has been a special blessing for Sharon. We're thrilled to see them mature spiritually and grow in their own areas of ministry. Just like the woman with her mites, so many of them give all they have and so infrequently receive something beautiful. What a joy it was to invite them into our home for a beautiful Christmas tea and be able to serve them. Their glowing faces with sparkling eyes were the most beautiful Christmas decorations we had in our home this Christmas.



Summer Activities

The school year may be over, however, that is not to say there is time off from anything this summer! A busy schedule of summer camps and visiting construction teams clamor for every spare minute of time. We began



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our summer with leaders' retreat, followed by the youth camps. Then we headed up to the field missionaries' meeting in Lima and off to Ichupampa with an American team to assist in the building a church there. Some of you will remember Charlie's heart for these precious mountain people and his early trips to minister there. How beautiful it is to see this work expand!



Weddings

Many couples in Peru never legalize their marriage, because it is so expensive. The civil ceremony is the only recognized ceremony, so they have their civil ceremony followed by their church ceremony. Once a year Pastor Ronnie arranges for a mass wedding ceremony, so that the church can help absorb some of the cost and make it affordable. This year we had four couples legalize their marriage. What's so special about this couple? They've been together for over 40 years--and most of them were miserable. When she found the Lord, every time she came, she wept and begged for us to pray for her husband's salvation. He was an alcoholic and their marriage greatly suffered the typical problems. In the natural, it seemed impossible, but with God



NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE! He received Christ about 6 months before this ceremony, and he was so excited to be able to take his wife officially before God. They

are amazing--beaming all the time with the joy of the Lord and what He has restored to them!! She's a beautiful example of what happens when a woman stands in the gap for her husband's salvation. She's also one of my faithful women in Ladies' Meeting, and can she ever testify!!

Christian



As you can see, Christian is still as lively as ever. He's been here long enough to really miss the U.S. At least we found a McDonald's in Chile and Lima! Overall, he has adjusted extremely well. Christian has learned Spanish very quickly and is fluent. He loves to see and learn new things! He's a big helper at the annexes and a tremendous blessing to us here. If you want some ideas of what you can do to help him have a taste of the U.S.

every now and then, the Assemblies of God has a really neat website at <http://www.ismk.org> with lots of ideas for missionary kids. As parents we'd truly appreciate anything you can do to help him feel connected to his own country--the good old USA!

PLEASE PRAY FOR . . .

- Mark and Melanie, our adult children in the States
- Residency approval
- VBS during the first week in February
- Space issues in Ciudad de Dios
- Spiritual maturity for our people
- Colegio Samuel



These are the most exciting days of our lives as we serve the Lord here in Peru to hurry in the harvest in these last days. On the old farm back home in Kansas it took everyone working together to bring in the harvest, and this analogy is as current today as it was in our childhood days. The Lord is searching to and fro for those who will say, "Yes, Lord!" to His call. We thank you all so very much for saying, "yes," when you heard the needs of the Steffler family responding to His call to Peru. We are so VERY aware of your love and support--that we are here as your arms extended. We can feel your prayers for the day-to-day challenges we experience here in this beloved land of Peru.

THANK YOU!

Every one of you are so precious to us; we couldn't do what we're doing without you. "Mil gracias" (a thousand thanks), as we say in Peru, for helping us come and touch Peru with His amazing love.