

Beginning our Service in Huanta, Peru
February 2016 Newsletter

Hello Dear Family & Friends!

Greetings with a hearty, "Buenos Dias" from Huanta, Peru!!

Arriving back to Peru on January 2nd, we can hardly believe that it is already February!

We are currently living in Huanta, Peru -- a small city about a 45 minute car ride away from Ayacucho, our eventual destination for the future church plant. Huanta is known as the "Emerald of the Andes" because it is very green compared to much of its surrounding Andes region. We are serving with the same local church with which we ministered last August when we were here for a six-week stint.

We are expanding our language skills along with more intentional cultural learning of the Quechua people here in the Peruvian mountains. Our mission leadership felt like a smaller city, with a slower pace of life, would facilitate this growth rather than in a faster paced setting, such as Ayacucho. We are learning new Quechua words and phrases, and trying all sorts of new fruits & vegetables that people give us, or that we find at the local market.

Have you ever tried to shoot a bow and arrow and hit the bull's eye in heavy wind? Maybe not, but this analogy may help you to understand something of what we face here. Our arrow, the gospel, is straight and true. Our target, the Quechua community, is in sight. Yet the winds of their culture are blowing strong.

As an example of getting a feel of the Quechua culture here, I

(Rick) want to tell you what happened last week that highlights the importance for us to know the customs of a people. As I was interviewing a Quechua lady to understand her culture, she told me about the "payment of the mountains" (el pago de los cerros). She explained that the local shamans (witch doctors) here give an offering, a payment, to the local mountain god called the "Apu" in order to buy his favor. Using her culture, which I just learned, I told her that God sent His only Son to pay off all of the debt of sin that she owed God. And I told her that all of the favor that she needed from God is already bought by Christ. Bulls eye! I wish you could have seen her face. We are learning to share the gospel of grace and truth to the Quechua.

As we come to know their culture better, we believe we place ourselves in the best position to share the good news in a way that they can understand. The gospel is not the problem. It is our presentation that needs adjustment. We want to bring the eternal love and reality of Christ to bear on the ever changing life of the Quechua. It is part of our desire to see communities of believers seeking to do this together.

We are also learning more about this place geographically. We took a trek to a local mountain called Razuhuillica with some folks from the church here.

The Johannes Gutenberg School, in which we helped with English classes last August, is also here in Huanta. Donna taught some English classes in their "Summer School" program after we arrived. They have not found an English teacher for this upcoming school year (that begins Feb. 29th) so they have asked us to help teach some English classes once again. We are busily preparing English lesson plans -- that we hope will promote their

communication success!

A few days after we arrived in Peru, a mission team of three friends came and encouraged us as we start into this new chapter of our missionary service. Theirs was more of a "vision & prayer trip" to learn how they & their churches might meet some needs here in this community as well as in the City of Ayacucho. Two of them (Pastor Wayne Sibrava & Mike MacMahon) had been here before, so the church folks were very happy to see them once again, as were we! Our opening photo is with that team and some of the church leadership here.

We have pretty well settled into our new home -- a hotel here in Huanta. The owner, Rogelio & his wife, have been very kind to us -- welcoming us with open arms, and meals, and conversations about life, marriage, the Lord, religion, and culture. Though it's a little "odd" living in a hotel -- with a common kitchen that many others use, not having our "own" space except for our bedroom -- it's a nice, safe place that we felt was the best choice for now. We have been able to share Christ with some of the hotel guests & invite them to church. It was neat when several of them came one Sunday!

We are finishing up the season of "Carnaval" here in Peru. It's like the South American version of Mardi Gras. It lasts for about 10 days or so. There are many groups dancing and parading in the streets in their traditional dress; there are lots of children and teens throwing water balloons or shooting water guns at passersby; (sometimes they begin to throw paint-filled balloons); there is a lot of drinking and "partying" in the streets. Also they put a lot of items up into a tree (baskets, clothes, blankets, toys, etc.) and dance around it while chopping the trunk with an axe every so often. The community gathers around waiting for the tree to fall so that they

can rush over and grab some of the items. It was very interesting to see.

Again, we are so grateful to those who financially support us to be here serving in Peru. We would not be able to remain here without your support. If you are feeling led to contribute toward our mission ministry here, you can make a donation by going to the SAM Website and clicking on **our** page. Here is the link:

<http://southamericamission.org/about/our-team/rick-donna-martin/>

As always, our reminder: Please check out our mission Facebook page: "**Martin's Mission Peru**" for more regular updates and brief tidbits of news and photos in between these Prayer updates. Here's the link:

<http://www.facebook.com/martinsmissionperu>

And don't forget, you can also check out Donna's Facebook page for some other personal perspectives.

Please pray for these concerns:

- English lesson preparations
- More fluid communication in Spanish
- Solid friendships to develop with the Quechua people
- Servant, patient hearts for the "unexpected" things that crop up regularly
- Our Church Planting Team -- we need more people to join the team

Answered Prayer

- A safe place to live in Huanta
- Safety in our travels
- Donna finally has her Peruvian Driver's License in her possession!!
- Better understanding of our ministry goals here in Huanta

We conclude with this verse:

"I am the Vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Praying for you God's wonderful blessing,

Rick & Donna Martin