

Report No. 1 from Alto Cayma – 9 Jul 17

Back in Alto Cayma

I'm back in Alto Cayma again. This is my 32nd trip to Peru, so I pretty



well know the way myself by now. However, I let my friend, Dennis, do most



of (aka all of) the flying, acceding to my fellow passengers' desire to live.

I got here last Sunday, July 1, and I'll be here for 3 full months this time, leaving for the States again on October 1. It was strange to arrive at the Arequipa airport with John and Ben as the only family members there to meet me. Carol was still in Oregon, finishing getting the 2 girls settled in. She was to return to Arequipa later in the week.

Worship Opportunities

The afternoon I arrived, I joined the TAC (Transforming Alto Cayma) Community Group for worship services in their new rented building. The



service was being conducted by Pastor Victor Anchante, with assistance from



two young musicians who had recently joined the church. My son-in-law,



John, preached the sermon that day, and during the sermon, the kids had



Children's Church in another room of the house. It was a busy afternoon.

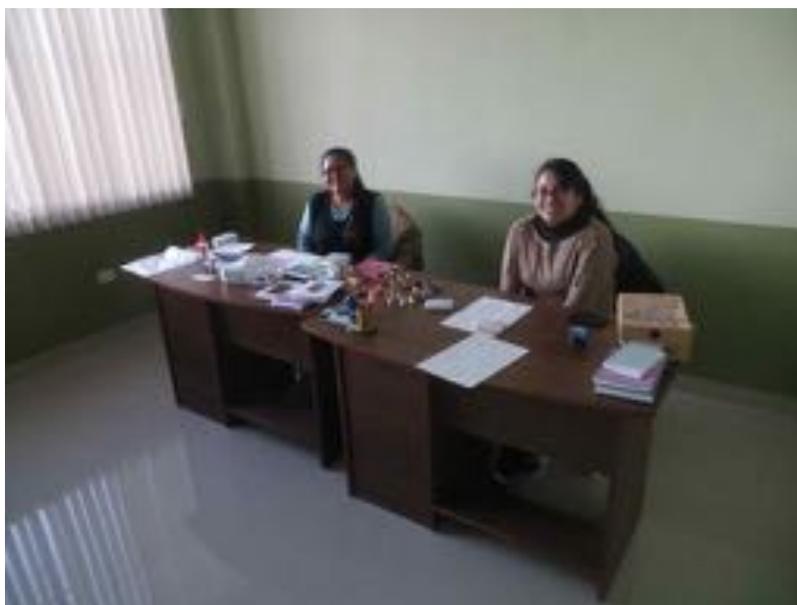
Leaving the Community Group, I continued up the hill to Primero de Junio to catch Father Alex' Sunday afternoon mass. That completed my



ecumenical reintegration into the reason we're here in Alto Cayma.

Home Visits

On Monday morning, we drove up to our new building in Mujeres con Esperanza, where we greeted Genoveva and Maribel, who were manning that



office this week.

We then went out into the neighborhood, to the house of Stephano, a little boy who is being sponsored in our Acercádonos program. We had first



encountered Stephano during a past visit by David & Donna Hodgkins. They found him in a ravine, holding two shoes that didn't match. When asked about the shoes, he explained that he had found them, and that he was taking them home because he didn't have any shoes. As a result of that encounter, Stephano is now being sponsored by David's brother, Steven. We visited Stephano this week so that Victor could deliver some presents that his



daughter, Nikole, had sent. Stephano was so enthusiastically grateful that he



jumped on Victor and knocked him over backwards onto the bed.

After visiting Stephano, we continued on to visit 3 other people, including Sr. Juan, age 88, who is a candidate for sponsorship in our



program. We then finished the morning with a visit to Maycol, whose story follows immediately below.

Put Yourself in the Shoes of Maycol and his Mother

Maycol is an 11-year old boy who lives in Mujeres con Esperanza. In February of this year, he was diagnosed with acute leukemia, for which he is now



undergoing treatment. Even before this illness came along, Maycol had had a tough life. His biological father is out of the picture, and Maycol lives with his mother, Carmen, and his stepfather, Javier, along with two younger half-siblings. Javier and Carmen fight a lot, which has caused a lot of stress in Maycol's young life. Carmen and Maycol both need the help of a psychologist. The ladies in our office are doing



what they can to cheer Maycol up. Maycol's stepfather, Javier, has treated Maycol badly for years, showing a definite preference for his own two biological children, although he is showing more consideration for Maycol now that the boy is very ill.

Javier works in construction, and makes around 1,000 soles (approximately \$310) a month when he can find work, but right now work is hard to find in Arequipa, so Javier has to travel to other parts of the country and be away from the family for weeks, or even months, at a time. Carmen stays home to take care of the house and the 3 children, so she isn't able to add anything to the family income.

Maycol is in a two-year treatment program for his leukemia. To date, he has had 2 chemotherapies and 5 blood transfusions. The family has only the most basic health insurance (think Medicaid), which covers most of the costs, but there are things the family must pay for themselves.

Javier built the house the family lives in himself. The house is well constructed, with brick walls, a corrugated metal roof and a cement floor. The house



does have electrical service, but no water and sewer, so the family has to haul their water to the house in buckets from a public water tap, and they have to use an outhouse. They also don't have much furniture, so Maycol has to share a single twin-



size bed with his younger half-brother.

In order to build the house, Javier had to take out a large loan (15,000 soles, the equivalent of all the money he could make in 15 months of work) to buy the materials, and making the payments on that loan is proving to be a struggle.

For all the above reasons, **Maycol's family is living from hand to mouth.** Maycol is at the top of our waiting list for an Acercádonos sponsorship. We urgently need someone who is in a position to contribute \$30 a month to step forward. Your sponsorship will make a huge marginal difference in the economic life of this struggling young family. Please send me an e-mail with any questions you might have.

Happy 241st Birthday, USA!

Tuesday, of course, was the 4th of July, and the flag flew proudly over our



house. We invited all the staff over for a cookout. The guests brought all the side



dishes, which were ample. No matter how big the lunch, our Peruvian friends leave



no leftovers.



We topped off the lunch with s'mores, which were a new treat for the people here. It was fun to watch their reaction when their marshmallows suddenly burst



into flame, but judging by the expressions afterwards, it appears that the end



product was worth the effort. We finished the day by shooting off fireworks just after dark.

Carol's Return

Carol returned from her trip to Oregon on Thursday, after having gotten her



last 2 daughters situated in the States. The reason this photo is blurry is because Carol never stops moving. Anyway, we are very glad to have her back.

English Classes

John is now teaching English classes both Thursdays (in Mujeres con Esperanza) and Fridays (at our other building down the hill). In the Friday classes, he's being assisted by Victor's daughter, Nikole, who is doing a nice job. They usually



get 12-20 kids in the Friday classes. For the Thursday classes in Mujeres con Esperanza, they typically get 50-60 kids. John doesn't have an assistant for that class, but he certainly needs one, so we're actively looking for someone.

Visiting the Elderly

Victor has assembled a group of elderly, but able-bodied, people in our program to visit other elderly people who are not doing so well. This photo was



taken just before they climbed into the van to go make 2 visits. The people being visited certainly enjoyed the company.

A Special Event for the Children in Mujeres con Esperanza

On Saturday morning, Jonathan Taype and 16 of his classmates from the



Philosophy Department at the National University came up to Mujeres con Esperanza to entertain 58 kids. They attempted to address the kids (lightly) on



some serious subjects, but for the most part, with kids this young, it had to be mostly entertainment,



dancing,



and giving out lots of balloons and treats.



At the end, some of the older kids were given books,



and the traditional group photo was taken.



Kids' Club

On Saturday morning, the TAC Kids' Club also met. This group is growing,



slowly but surely. Now that the church is in a more visible location, people are beginning to pass the word.

Acercádonos Elderly Meeting

On Saturday afternoon, we had our regular monthly meeting with the elderly



“ahijados” (sponsees) in the Acercádonos program. We presented one new “ahijada”, Sra. Antonia, who is in the program because a chronic illness prevents her



from doing steady work.

Olfa Chavez, a nurse from the Policlínico, gave an excellent talk on influenza



which was very timely, since many people here became ill during a recent stretch of cold weather.

At the end of the meeting, I announced that we would sponsor another outing for the elderly in just a couple of weeks, which of course made them very happy.

Rotaract/Interact “Cambio de Mazo”

After the meeting with the elderly on Saturday, the staff of the Acercándonos program held our weekly Staff Meeting (there’s too much going on in the office to do this during the week), after which Lidia, Sabina and I headed for the National University for the “Cambio de Mazo”, which is the installation of new Officers and Directors of our Rotaract and Interact service clubs. Here’s outgoing President



Melisa swearing in incoming President Joseph of the Rotaract Club.

Rotaract Club Meeting

On Sunday evening, the day after the installation ceremony, I attended the first meeting of the Rotaract club under Joseph’s leadership. Lidia and I were there



to specifically discuss support needed for their Library Project, but this being the first meeting of the new Rotary year, there were lots of other topics to discuss concerning the health of the club as well. Like all incoming leaders, Joseph faces a number of challenges, but I'm sure he'll rise to the occasion.

Coming Attractions

- On Thursday the 13th, a new assistant English teacher is coming on board
- On Friday the 21st, a group of 5 visitors is arriving
- On Saturday the 22nd, we're taking the elderly on their outing, and also holding another special event up in Mujeres con Esperanza

Details on these and other stories will appear in future Reports from Alto Cayma.

“Love God, Serve Neighbor/Serving Alto Cayma”,

Jim