

Report No. 2 from Alto Cayma - 25 Feb 18

New Wheels

After waving off the deal with the first Yamaha dealership, we went to a second dealership and found a suitable model in stock. They delivered it to



Alto Cayma on Wednesday. I had to sign for the delivery, as I expected, but I didn't know that I'd also have to give them my fingerprint. (If it would have



been a Harley, would I have had to give them a DNA sample? :-)

No sooner had the bike hit the ground when the modern-day equivalent of an old-time "hoss thief" tried to make off with my new mount,



but I recovered it, and have been riding it ever since, gently breaking it in. Even in the first few kilometers, the quality of "Made in Japan" is highly evident - much different than "Made in China"!

A Strategic Plan for the Association Serving Alto Cayma (ASAC)

As part of fine tuning the way we work, we're currently in the process of capturing in writing the definition of who we are, what we do here, how we do it, and why. Lidia, our Business Administration major (who is incidentally No. 1 in her class at the university, an achievement that was formally



recognized at the end of the school year) is leading this effort, and our Executive Team is meeting once a week to work on it. The immediate driving need is for personnel management within the Association, but the document will have far-reaching impacts both inside and outside the ASAC. It's another step in our maturation as an organization.

The Rebirth of New Horizons

Our New Horizons youth group had been pretty much dormant for the past couple of years, so Victor did some advance field work before the holidays last year to try to be ready to relaunch the group this year. We held the inaugural meeting on Thursday morning. 27 kids had signed up as being interested, and 20 made it to the meeting - a good number. We used this opportunity to gather data on activities the kids were interested in, problems



they were having, etc. We also played games, some of which were more



"spirited" than others.



At the end, we treated them to pizza, but told them not to expect such



a treat every time, because our fund which supports the New Horizons youth group is exhausted.

In the past, this group had met two Saturdays every month, but when we asked the new group how often they wanted to meet, 17 of the 20 present voted for every week (and that was before they knew they were going to get pizza!), so we'll try to maintain that high level of enthusiasm.

As I was leaving the meeting, I encountered yet another "hoss thief"



trying to make off with my steed. :-)

Bad Things Happen in Threes

In the space of just a few days this week, we suffered the following blows:

- One of our staff members was mugged in the street, 2 blocks from our office, at 6:30 p.m., and had her purse stolen.
- We learned that there is nothing more the doctors can do for one of our children who is suffering from leukemia.
- An older girl who lives in the Mujeres con Esperanza settlement, who is a deaf mute, was abducted by a couple of suspects as she was about to enter an internet cafe and was held captive until early the next morning.

I don't like to dwell on things like these, but everyone who is interested on our work in the Association should know that things like this do happen from time to time, and when they do, a crisis response is required, especially from Pastor John, Social Worker Briza, and all-around problem solver Victor, and that response takes priority over everything else. That's why we're here.

Fourth Saturday Program

The fourth Saturday of every month, we do a special program in Mujeres con Esperanza, rotating among the children, the parents and the elderly. This Saturday it was the kids' turn, and we put on a cartoon show for



them. We got a pretty good turnout, considering that that same day, the municipal government had organized a trip to the beach for underprivileged kids.

A Scammer Busted

One lady brought her 3 kids to the cartoon show on Saturday morning, and was buttonholing members of our staff to tell them of her needs, in hopes

of getting a sponsorship for one of her kids. One particular need she cited was for 90 soles to get her little TV set out of hock at the corner store where she had left it as security for that amount of groceries. The lady said that her kids were really pressing her that they wanted to be able to watch TV. Since Victor, Briza and I were all there, we decided to give the lady and her kids a ride home afterwards and see their living conditions. This was a surprise, as the lady hadn't anticipated that we would drop everything and go visit her house right then and there.

From the beginning of the visit, we sensed that the lady was being



evasive in answering our questions. For example, when we asked about this antenna on the roof of one room, she said that it was just for



decoration, that they couldn't afford the service and the company just hadn't come to pick up the dish. When Victor asked to see what was in that room, she had "trouble" opening it, but he insisted. When she finally succeeded, Genoveva, who had also come with us, engaged the lady in conversation outside while the rest of us entered the room. Inside we found some very interesting articles. Most really poor people don't have computers with



modern flat panel displays, for example, nor do they have even bigger flat panel display TVs. When Victor fired up the TV (with help from the kids, who were very familiar with how to do it), guess what - active satellite service!



The kids didn't seem to miss their little TV, hocked at the corner store, so much after all.

We ended the interview making clear to the lady that we can't work with people we can't trust to tell the truth, and we drove back to our building with the groceries we had brought to give to her still in the back of the van.

Bridge to Opportunity Meeting

Bridge to Opportunity (BTO) is the program for students studying in academies, trying to compete successfully for entrance to the National University. At Saturday's meeting of this group, Yessica gave a talk on



Industrial Engineering, the career she aspires to study. Lidia then issued a call for letters. These kids need to write two letters each - one to the BTO program and one to their individual "padrinos" (sponsors) that most of them brought with them when they transferred over from the Acercádonos sponsorship program.

This group is a mix of kids who just graduated from high school last December and are just starting their preparation in the academy, and a few who graduated earlier but are still trying to get into the university. The next entrance exam for the National University is scheduled for March 18.

Evangelical Church of the Good Shepherd

For those who don't know, that's the name of the church which John and Carol have planted here. When the Mission Team from their home church in Salem, OR, visited here last year, they cleaned out the area behind the rented house which serves to house the church. This photo shows where



they're now getting ready to pour a concrete floor in that area and turn it into an expanded worship space. Experience has shown that this is the best way to do floors here in Arequipa. In case of an earthquake, the rocks under the concrete allow the earth to move underneath the building without cracking the concrete floor - one of many construction techniques they've learned here over centuries of experience living and building in a seismically active zone.

And that brings us to the close of another week of activity in Alto Cayma, where if it hasn't happened yet, it's probably just about to.

"Love God, Serve Neighbor/Serving Alto Cayma",

Jim