

Funks Update June 2009

"Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." (Nehemiah 4:14b)

Nehemiah chapter 4 has been on my mind for the last weeks. Most of you know that we are now since February working in Piura, a city in the North of Peru, helping to restore a Church after some problems. God is working through our **Obedience** and not so much through our **Gifts**, as we might have thought. We believe that God has brought us here for more than just to work with this Church, and even though we have to admit we don't understand totally yet what it all will mean, our Obedience to His call is certain and that is all that he asks of us at this point.

A few weeks ago we read in the local News Paper that only In Piura alone, a smaller city there are about 23.000 single mothers, with an average of 2 children each. Piura is Number one in all of Peru in Family violence; 8 out of 10 children are abused in their Homes, Sullana, neighboring city where we also have a Church, is the second most dangerous city in Peru, with assaults on a daily bases, and with a morality compared to Sodom and Gomorra.

You probably heard about the armed military confrontations in the Peruvian Rainforest with the Native population. On June 5-6 violent clashes erupted between police officers and indigenous protesters in the northern provinces of Bagua and Utcubamba after the officers attempted to intervene in a roadblock that has been ongoing since April 2009. Official figures claim that 24 police officers and nine indigenous demonstrators were killed in the conflicts, while Indian leaders claim that at least 30 of their members were killed. Protesters allege that violence erupted only after authorities fired bullets and tear gas at the demonstrators from helicopters; however, authorities claim that the Indians forced them to respond after they shot at the officers and set fire to government buildings.

But the needy will not always be forgotten, nor the hopes of the afflicted ever perish.

Every year children die in the mountain area because of the cold and it seems that nobody cares. How can we make a difference in such a world? It is easy to feel overwhelmed and just leave it up to others, but we are trying to make especially the young generation sensitive to the problems of their country by talking about alternative methods of solving problems. Our favorite things are; for Otto, spend long hours with the boys and young man talking about what it means to follow Jesus all the time (four of them new Christians preparing for baptism) for Lidia, sharing experiences, while cooking together with the young girls. Our neighbors have included us into their family and start coming to Church, they are joking about gathering signatures and send them to the Churches in Canada, so that we will come back to work with them in the neighborhood for another 3 years.

I just want to share with you shortly how God transformed us and made a Bible text come alive for us. We visited with Mijat, a 25 year old mother of a one year old son, she has HIV and her health goes down fast. Now she faces surgery for cancer. Lidia made the connection with her while we worked in Lima and we continue to have this connection now by phone and on the chat line (computer). I (Otto) had spent until midnight talking to her about forgiveness. When we met, she was so happy and said: “I forgave everybody in our Home for Mothers with HIV and I asked everybody officially for forgiveness in our meeting.”

As we talked, she shared that her father had tried to stone her when she was small and she had grown up on the street, sense she was 9 years old. Our heart was hurting to hear, all that she went through in her short life. As we talked to her about God’s forgiveness and his love for her, she smiled and we knew she understood from the bottom of her heart. When we prayed for her before we left, she said: My father does not recognize me as his daughter, but I will go to my sisters place for father’s day and forgive all my family, and my father, and I will ask for their forgiveness. In my heart I prayed: “Oh God that your people would understand with such ease” and I understood what Jesus meant when he said: **that the poor in spirit will understand and theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** I know I will see her in Heaven, because I have seen God’s spirit already here in her face. She is the happiest and most grateful person we know.



Mijat, Otto and little Mijaet



Lidia, Mijaet and Mijat

Is God working here? **Absolutely!** But most of all he works in us, so that others can see the transformation that we are going through. Is that being a light to the world? When you love, give, share, and when you think you cannot give any more, God multiplies! Some of you might say; “I would not do what Missionaries do for a Million Dollars” we would not either, and as Mother Teresa said: **“Sometimes I feel selfish for all the Community we get, we are always surrounded by people, but the good thing is that there is enough for all to enjoy such fellowship.”**

Prayer Requests

Please pray for our Churches and their leaderships, as they are not immune to the illness of their surroundings.

Many falter and fall, and many times there is nobody to help them back up, pray that we might be there to help. Pray that we will not just be good Samaritans, but work on making the Road safer for all travelers.

Pray for Mijat and her son Mijaet.

For our health, protection and safety, especially now as we plan to travel to Paraguay to visit family and friends and be part of the Mennonite World Conference

For Love, guidance and unity in the churches.

When Jesus comes to you walking on water in the storm, recognize him and don't scream "It's a Ghost".

Thank you all for your Prayer and Financial support.

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