

## Open Eyes, Open Ears, Open Minds

25.03.13

### First, Open Minds

Last week was fun, busy and tiring. Pastor Orlando Moller, a United Methodist Pastor and dual citizen of Bolivia and the US, led a three-day theological course for about 40 regional church leaders – a few came from as far away as Oruro, about a 9 hour bus ride. Bishop Javier Rojas came from La Paz for the kick-off. Unfortunately, due to health problems with the District Coordinator in Perú, none of the Peruvian church leaders were able to attend.



Pastor Orlando is a natural teacher – animated, playful, well read, and mindful of his students. He did a masterful job of coaching the attendees. Nearly all local churches are led by lay pastors who've had only minimal education – most are carpenters, shepherds or fishermen. They've had virtually no seminary training, and have minimal experience and training in pastoral care and leadership. Some speak only Aymara. A few are illiterate. But they are church leaders. And their congregations depend on them, especially in times of trouble. Orlando inspired, stretched and fed their spirits and minds.



## Aymarans Meet Sloppy Joe



While the church leaders -- including a few women! -- gobbled up Pastor Orlando's instruction, some of us were cooking. I (Deb) and two or three women married to church leaders served three colossal lunches, two modest dinners, two breakfasts and four snacks for 40 people. For dinner Thursday night Jeff and I made Sloppy Joes, and Snickerdoodles for dessert. The sandwiches were a relatively inexpensive way to feed a lot of people quickly from a small, cramped kitchen equipped with only a big three-burner stove on the floor, about five feet of narrow counter space, and a 12 x 15" sink, but no water.



Wow, our friends and co-workers *loved* the Sloppy Joes! In Spanish, the direct translation is "*Sandwich José Chopucero.*" The business coordinator for the regional church is named José, so the crowd got a good laugh when we translated "Sloppy Joes" (*That's José laughing and pointing his finger in photo above*). We were happy to serve seconds to many, and still had enough to send leftovers home with the women who'd made lunch. Handing out Snickerdoodles created a small feeding frenzy. Very few home kitchens here have ovens, so baked goods are a precious rarity.

## Stone Oven – Horno de Piedra – Huaja Kala

Friday marked the final day of the pastoral training, so lunch, always the biggest, grandest meal of the day, was spectacular! We'd moved the group to Sicuani, a small, but Eden-like village where the mission built a greenhouse last August and September with local folks and a mission team from the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church. Pastor Orlando had been part of that team, so it was cool to show him the functioning greenhouse.





Sicuani is the site for one of three regional *avancadas*, or church plants. The family that often hosts church gatherings there has four subterranean stone ovens. Justina and Isobela, who'd done most of the cooking in Copa, had packed eight cut-up chickens, many pounds of potatoes and *oka* (a carrot-shaped, chestnut-flavored local tuber), bunches of bananas, heads of lettuce and mounds of tomatoes.



While the chicken pieces marinated in mayo, *aji amarillo* ("AH he," a mildly hot, yellow, local pepper), garlic and cumin, a super-hot fire blazed in one of the stone ovens. Once the fire developed a bed of glowing embers, Fausto, Gustavo and Nelson pulled out the logs and layered hot, flat stones over the embers.

They dumped a cauldron of potatoes over the stones and sandwiched more hot stones over the spuds. The layering continued: the chicken pieces were sandwiched between thick brown paper, covered with more hot stones, then more potatoes, hot stones, more paper, then the *oka* and bananas covered with more paper, and more hot stones. A tub of *habas* (fava beans) was spilled onto the mound and covered with many layers of paper and tarps. Several big stones were positioned to block the vent. Finally, they heaped about 8 inches of dirt onto the pile and patted it down.



An hour and half later, Fausto, Gustavo and Nelson carefully removed the dirt and stones, and plucked out all the roasted food. MMmmm, mmmm! Tender. Juicy. Delicious. Heaven on a plate, in Bolivia's Garden of Eden!



## Dia del Mar – Day of the Sea



Bolivia normally celebrates Dia del Mar on March 23 in commemoration of the start of the War of the Pacific, fought with Perú against Chile from 1879 to 1883. But this year, March 23 fell on a Saturday. The marches, parades and street dances are quite popular among school children, so the date was shifted to Friday, March 22.

Throughout the country, schools closed. Here in Copa lots of little kids dressed up as soldiers, navy men or nurses. All the school kids and marching bands trouped past the main plaza and down to the beach where they paraded around for the whole afternoon.



On March 23, 1879, Bolivia marched 100 ill-equipped soldiers into a coastal area of modern-day Chile, aiming to enforce a new 10-cent tax on salt. The territory was protected by an army of 500 well armed, well trained Chilean soldiers, who promptly routed the Bolivian squadron. In the conflict Bolivia lost 120,000 square kilometers of its coastline to Chile. In another battle with Chile in 1904 Bolivia lost an even larger chunk, the last of its original Pacific shoreline. The loss virtually curtailed Bolivia's shipping industry, and is still mourned, even in casual, daily conversations.

## Open Eyes, Open Ears

In recent newsletters we've mentioned that January through March is a natural time for planning because the rains make it impossible to build, and sometimes impossible to travel. So we've been receiving a lot of "*solicitudes*," requests for mission funds. Some are easy and inexpensive, such as one seeking supplies for the 13 students in a poor rural school, or the 24 students in a mountain school south of Copa. The mission will easily meet those requests using general funds, spending about a \$1 for each student.

A harder, trickier request was submitted by a group of senior citizens. Their representative, Sabino Nina, has visited our house three times, once to deliver a typed *solicitud* bearing ten signatures and five thumbprints from people who can't write, and twice to check its status.

In his odd mix of Spanish and Aymara, Sabino told me, "Some of the old people can't hear well. And some can't see well. They can't see, so they cannot walk. So they cannot get to market to get food.

"They want to know: Can you help them get glasses for walking, not for reading? From the United States? Can your friends there help my friends here?"

Jeff and I are exploring the possibility of getting a cube of prescription glasses from Lions Clubs International. If we can get glasses, we and/or a visiting mission team will try to match lenses to people, hoping for the best.

Cusijata, 7 de marzo de 2013

Señor:  
 Jeff Wasilevich Deborah Rissing  
 United Methodist Volunteers in Mission  
 Presente.-  
**Ref.: SOLICITUD DE LENTES Y AUDIFONOS Y CARPAS SOLARES**

De mi mayor consideración:

Mediante el presente la asociación adultos mayores de comunidad de cusijata machac sartawi , tenemos el grato honor de dirigimos a su digna persona, para hacer llegar nuestros saludos de respeto y aprecio deseándoles el mejor de los éxitos, en la función que desempeña en bien de la población campesina.  
 El motivo que nos induce es para solicitarle muy respetuosamente la dotación de **lentes, audifonos y carpas solares** en beneficio de cada uno de nosotros, que muchos ya estamos mal de la vista, de igual manera de oídos ya no podemos escuchar bien y necesitamos para nuestros mantenimientos la carpa solar y se detalla en la siguiente manera.

Nro.	NOMBRES Y APELLIDOS	C. I.	PEDIDOS
1.-	Eleuteria Rojas Mamani	6145812	audifono
2.-	Victoria Chipana Quispe	276797	audifono
3.-	Simona Warawara	613829	Lentes
4.-	Maria Mendoza Tito	2433687	Audifono
5.-	Julia Chambilla	2587753	Audifono
6.-	Martina Luque Tito	4969330	Lentes <i>Ernesto Montesino</i>
7.-	Seferino Chambilla	416211	Lentes
8.-	Maria M. Tito Chambilla	9152081	Lentes <i>Ernesto Montesino</i>
9.-	Emilio Mmani Amaru		audifono
10.-	Roberto Paye	2254798	Carpa solar <i>Roberto Paye</i>
11.-	Agusto Montesino	2252869	Lentes
12.-	Roberto Chambilla		Audifono <i>Ernesto Montesino</i>
13.-	Braulio Warawara	415817	Lentes <i>Braulio</i>
14.-	Teodoro Chambilla	23149	Lentes
15.-	Francisca Chambilla	2273380	Carpa solar
16.-	Tereza Reyna Ramos	6164526	Carpa solar
17.-	Blasida Valda	3993961	Carpa solar <i>Blasida</i>
18.-	Margarita Chipana	7779679	Carpa solar
19.-	Juliana Huarahuara Chambilla	9868188	Audifono
20.-	Beatriz Huarahuara Paye	2588008	lentes <i>Beatriz</i>

Esperando la respuesta positiva a nuestra solicitud nos despedimos reiterando nuestro saludo cordial.

Atentamente.

13/03/13

.....  
 Teodoro Chambilla  
 FUNDADOR


*Ernesto Montesino*  
 Ernesto Montesino  
 PRESIDENTE

*Cerferino Chambilla*  
 Cerferino Chambilla  
 TESORERO

.....  
 Eleuteria Ramos  
 VOCAL 1ro.

*Sabino Nina*  
 Sabino Nina  
 SUPERVISOR  
 CARPA SOLAR Y audifono

*Recepcionada Rissing  
 17 de marzo 2013*




Hearing aids are a tougher challenge. We don't know of organizations that "recycle" used hearing aids, but maybe they exist. If you have a lead, please let us know, *pronto!*

## 60 Bites

If you're squeamish, skip this section.

Throughout South America, bed bugs reign when it rains. The nearly microscopic little buggers live in floor boards and skulk out at night, seeking warm blood. They sip Jeff's, but they positively *feast* on mine! If bed bugs have never afflicted you, lucky you! Their bites are maddeningly itchy, like a bad poison ivy rash. They nail their victims most anywhere but the face and scalp. From date of bite to pretty well healed takes about two weeks. Last week, in exasperation, I counted: 60 bites, ranging from fresh, red and welted, to older and scabbed, and everything in between, including recently clawed and bleeding. I've taken to sleeping in a silk sack meant to protect against the little blood suckers. Thank God and REI, it's working.

Yes, we could spray insecticide under our bed, a mattress on the floor. But unlike home-use pesticides in the States, one cannot assume that sprays sold here are safe for humans and pets. Some of our Andean friends suggested placing chunks of aromatic *palo santo*, literally, "holy stick" wood under the mattress. We tried that, but it didn't work. I've also smeared *palo santo* oil on my legs. That didn't work either.



Happily, rainy season is nearly over!



Sleep tight, don't let the ... oh, you know the rest!

With love, hugs, and cheerful anticipation of our coming busy season,

Deb and Jeff and the folks of the Titicaca region!

We leave you with a couple of photos from our Sunday afternoon hike to the top of 15,994-foot Cerro L'Kha Khaua: Left, the 23,114-foot peak of Ancohuma in the Cordillera Real, and Right, looking down nearly 3,000 vertical-feet to Lake Titicaca and the town and peninsula of Copacabana.

