

## Report No. 6 from Alto Cayma – 13 Jul 08

### Shake, Rattle & Roll

At 4:13 on Tuesday morning, Arequipa awoke to an earthquake. It was a little over 5.0 in magnitude, and centered in the Colca region, less than 100 miles from here. As our house shook back and forth, I was wondering if this shaking was “it”, or if it was just a warmup for “IT”. We got out of bed and calmly made our way to the point where we can hug our favorite column, but just as we got there, the shaking stopped. And then the phone began to ring, with people wondering how we “greenhorns” had taken the quake. As it turned out, we took it better than many of the “veterans”, who still haven’t gotten over the trauma of the 8.0 “Big One” that hit Arequipa in 2001. For some people who went through that terrifying experience, any tremor is enough to throw them into a panic.

### Visitors

Victoria and Alex went trekking in the Colca Canyon on Sunday and Monday. (If they would have gone one day later, they would have been on a trail hiking up out of the canyon just as the earthquake hit – now, that would have been interesting!) They spent Monday night in the Volunteer House in order to be in position for a 6 a.m. departure to visit the gold mining village in the mountains with Father Alex on Tuesday. Later in the week we went on home visits to the two kids who are being sponsored by Victoria’s mother and grandmother.

Sherry Fowler left a week ago Saturday, as reported last week, but her legacy lived on this past week as we visited the Aldea with Dwight, her father, to see the first prototypes of the new sweatsuits she is buying for all the kids. They looked very nice, and I’m glad that Dwight could at least take some photos home for Sherry to see.

Dwight also finished his current visit this past week. He was very pleased with the work his woodturning students did. (This time they made some new things – pepper mills and earring holders.) He was leaving Friday afternoon, but we took him out for a “farewell” dinner on Tuesday night, just in case the General Strike beginning on Wednesday paralyzed the whole city and we wouldn’t be able to get back downtown again before he left. Thursday was the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday of Soledad, one of the girls he’s sponsoring, and he surprised her that evening with a cake from Capriccio. On Friday we packed him out with around 800 cards from Creaciones Angel, saving the girls a fortune in shipping costs. The farewell at the airport was tearful, especially for Soledad and Elizabeth, his two oldest “ahijadas” (sponsees), who are old

enough to fully appreciate all that Dwight is doing for them. He has become like the fathers they no longer have, only better.

As Dwight leaves, we're watching for the arrival of Laura Rosenbach and Meghan O'Brien from Charlotte next week, and are even planning projects for the visit by the Dilworth Rotary Club in mid-August, more about which all in due time.

### **Acercádonos (“Coming Together”) Sponsorship Program**

Those who have visited Alto Cayma will remember Isabel, the elderly lady in the straw hat who appears in the upper righthand corner of the mural painted on the wall at Father Alex' compound in Primero de Junio. This past week Isabel had an operation in the hospital downtown. The operation went well, but since Isabel doesn't have any money and has no insurance, Victor and Luisa from the Acercádonos office went to the hospital to see what kind of a deal they could negotiate for her. Victor credits Luisa with talking them into letting Isabel go with only a 100 sol (approximately \$35) token charge for everything. (I think Luisa must have talked to them in Quechua!) Of course that was just for hospitalization and the surgeon's fee. Down here the patient also has to bring their own medications, and even the thread and needle for their sutures, to the hospital with them. That stuff came to another 200 soles or so.

### **Salir Adelante (“Getting Ahead”) Educational Sponsorships**

We picked up one more scholarship commitment this week, this one for Vicky, a 20 year-old girl who is studying to become a Phys Ed teacher. We'll include her in the next monthly Salir Adelante meeting this coming Saturday.

### **Youth Group**

Our new youth group still doesn't have a name, but we had 56 kids in our house yesterday for a talk on drug and alcohol abuse by Javier Zevallos, Giuliana's brother, who is a policeman specializing in this area. Alcohol abuse is very prevalent here, and drugs are becoming more and more of a problem every year. Besides Javier, we also had Oscar Garcia on hand to liven things up for the kids with some dynamic activities which were a lot of fun.

### **Aldea “Sagrada Familia” (The Orphanage)**

Saturday was also the monthly birthday party in the Aldea. (It's getting so that Saturday is one of the busiest days in our week, often with

multiple events on the same day.) Oscar was again on hand to help out with games for the children. He does all this on a purely voluntary basis. We certainly have been lucky in finding people like him to work with us.

### **Rotary Projects**

Last night was the Installation Ceremony for the new leadership of Father Alex' Arequipa Cayma Rotary Club. The outgoing President, Karelia Catacora, the lawyer who used to work for Father Alex, handed over the reins to Carlos Osorio, the veterinarian who helped us dispatch Blacky to Dog Heaven last year, so it's a small world. The accomplishments of the past year were recounted, including a couple of projects involving clubs in District 7680 in North Carolina – the new Eye Clinic and the Police Vehicle project.

### **The General Struck**

The General Strike, which began on Jul 9, ended on the same day, hence the past tense. It was generally a dud, with no better than lukewarm support from the people. The issue – the economic squeeze caused by rising prices, especially gasoline – remains valid, but it's debatable what benefit can be achieved by shutting the country down for days on end. It's better to take positive action to relieve the suffering, in other words

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

Jim