

DANIEL & SONIA ARAUJO



Serving the Lord in Arequipa, Peru | araujodaez@gmail.com | +51.980.878.808

Good News from Afar

"Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."
Proverbs 25:25

Dear brothers & sisters in Christ,

After a very long time, I am grateful for the opportunity to greet you again through this medium. I pray this letter finds you in good health and enjoying the richest of blessings from our heavenly Father. Thank you for your faithful prayer support and monthly financial contributions. Truly, you are an integral part of the **DIAPHEROS** ministry. Your generosity has kept and continues to keep the gospel going forth in this part of the world. Through your giving, you are supporting the work and ministries of three national missionaries (myself, Pastor Edwin Mamani & Pastor Luis Medina) who are planting churches in different districts of Arequipa. I pray this overdue report from far away is like cold water to your thirsty soul; may it be a blessing to you as you read what God has done, and may it be an encouragement to you to continue faithfully extending your reach unto the uttermost corners of the earth until our Savior returns!



Church Construction in Candahua



Daniel & Sonia Araujo

Update from the Field...

Located at roughly 10,500 feet above sea level, in the foothills of a volcano that has been continually erupting since 2008, lies the prolific valley village of **Candahua**. Access to this town is very limited, as only one bus passes through each day to transport travelers on the 9-hour journey from/to Arequipa. To many, going to such a place means arriving at the ends of the earth. That was certainly even more true 25 years ago when we first began ministry efforts there. Now, most of the inhabitants are elderly, approximately 60 years of age and older. Yet, there is still a small group of believers here who desire to faithfully finish their race of faith. Last year, several entered the presence of the Lord. Which is one of the reasons that the others have been even more motivated to finish a lifelong dream of theirs - building a church temple in which to hold their meetings. By God's grace and with the help of the principal church in Arequipa as well as through the giving of a very generous church in the States, the believers used their fading strength to make their own blocks and construct what had been their hearts' desire for decades. This month, we are looking forward to the inauguration of the church building! Please pray for this event and for the whole town to gather together with us as we celebrate God's goodness and share the gospel with the onlooking villagers. Please also pray with us for a **\$750** need to purchase chairs to fill this beautiful new sanctuary.

Black magic, satanic rituals, animal and even human sacrifices are still common occurrences throughout many villages in the highlands of Peru. Asking for mother earth's favor and blessings through occult practices and using guinea pigs to remove disease from the body were just some of Yony's daily activities. Yony was one of the well-known "healers" in her village of **Huambo**. Her partner, Amaru, was tormented day and night by her actions. But, out of love for their five children together, he maintained his relationship with Yony. In reality, they were never married. They were just living together. One day, they couldn't take it any longer and called me out of desperation for help (I have a long history with Amaru's parents and several of his siblings who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ through the years). So, my wife and I immediately packed our bags for the 8-hour journey through the Andes mountains and to the heights of Huambo. After meeting together with Yony & Amaru, we returned home to Arequipa with the sweetest of news: both received Christ as their Savior, Yony decided to leave her occult occupation behind, and they planned to



Yony & Amaru's Civil Wedding Ceremony



Yony & Amaru's Baptism in Huambo



Counseling National Pastors in Iquitos



Natan & Jesus Discipleship Completion

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fix their relationship before God in holy matrimony and afterwards be baptized as they seek God's blessing upon their lives! We returned just weeks later for their combined wedding ceremony and baptism, which was a beautiful testimony of God's redeeming grace and an incredible opportunity to share the power of the gospel with guests and relatives in attendance. God is still at work doing incredible things in hearts and at the heights of the earth!

When I received Christ as my Savior nearly 40 years ago, God planted a fervent desire in my heart to take His gospel to the remote and forgotten places of my country. In the infancy of my faith, He graciously allowed me to accompany a veteran missionary into the depths of the jungle of Cusco, Peru (where Machu Picchu, one of the new seven wonders of the world, is only the gateway to this vast area). It was there in those villages where I surrendered my life to the Lord's service as a result of seeing the great need of lost souls. Since then, I have longed to return to the jungle of Peru but was content with the nostalgia that remained in my heart from my first missionary trips while God had me working in the province of Arequipa. BUT, not long ago, God opened the door for me to visit the Amazon jungle of *Iquitos* along with my wife Sonia, my son Junior, my daughter-in-law Sarah, and my one-year-old granddaughter Adelyn. While there, I had the incredible opportunity to teach 14 other national pastors and leaders who traveled by river for hours/days to get to us. With the 30+ years of experience that the Lord has given me in the ministry, I was able to counsel these men as they asked difficult questions about their personal lives, families and ministries. Having traveled as part of a medical campaign, I was able to personally evangelize more than 100 attendees throughout the 9 days of clinics. I also had the opportunity to preach to large groups of people. It was an immense joy to be part of this team and witness souls surrendering their lives at the foot of the cross. I thank God for granting me the privilege to fulfill a longtime dream of returning to the jungle of my country.

Therefore and make disciples of all nations. These well-known words from Matthew 28:19 (ESV used to emphasize the word "disciples") are considered to be some of the last words that Jesus spoke before ascending to the presence of His Father, and it is the mission that He left behind for future generations of believers to complete while we await His coming return. By God's grace, both my wife and I have tremendous opportunity to disciple adolescents, teenagers, young men and women, as well as married couples here in *Arequipa* - teaching them the basic truths of Christianity, helping them take their first steps of faith, and accompanying them in counsel and prayer as they learn to walk in the Spirit and put their gifts to use in service to the Lord. Our discipleship program lasts for one year. At completion, each disciple goes before the congregation to recite 25 memory verses from respective lessons and publicly commit to continue the call of discipleship with others. Last year, 7 believers completed the discipleship program. Please pray for us, for those who have completed the program, and for those to come in the future - that the Lord will multiply faithful disciples who are grounded in the truth of His Word and walking in the power of His Spirit.

This year, I turned 69 years old by God's grace. God has been so very good to me through the years, allowing me to spend my physical body in His spiritual work. My body now feels the wear and tear of years of hard work. In a dual effort, I underwent prostate surgery and had a cyst removed less than a year ago. While I faced complications in the initial stage of recovery, I am thankful to report that I have since recovered well and am back to serving the Lord full-time. My wife Sonia is facing some debilitating sequels from her fight with severe psoriasis. She is developing psoriatic arthritis in both of her knees. She may be a small woman, but she is a powerhouse of energy for the Lord - always on the go and at great speed. She can never sit still for long, so her pain greatly affects her daily life. She also suffers from glaucoma. We are praying that the Lord will provide \$400 for her glasses until we can save enough for a very expensive laser eye operation in the future to control the progression of the glaucoma. While we undeniably face age-related ailments, I think that, like Caleb, I/we can still say to the Lord, "Now therefore give me this mountain (Joshua 14:12)." I know that God has even greater things in store for us, and I pray that He will use our lives for His glory for many more years to come. Our physical strength may be declining, but our strength in the Lord is increasing. May He alone sustain us until we finish our race on earth!

A big hug in Christ from Arequipa, Daniel + Sonia Araujo

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