

Twin Peaks

From the Padilla-DeBorst in Costa Rica

December 2011

Institute Pro Integral Education

Andrea was very relieved. “My job was so demanding, I was always striving to find time for ministry,” she explained at the end of Graduate Retreat sponsored by the Institute Pro Integral Education. “But I now see that the work I do every day and the people I spend my working hours with *are* my ministry!” Andrea was one of some 25 young professionals from Mexico, Central America and Panama, gathered to consider “Work, vocation, and mission.” After spending those days together they returned to their countries and jobs with a renewed sense of calling in and through their professions. The Institute Jim heads up seeks to create and offer tools that will strengthen this vision so that teachers, lawyers, biologists, and professionals from diverse fields will recognize that they too are doing Christian ministry.

Theology for life

A usual evening meal in our home includes some ten people. But that evening in November we were twenty-two. Not an unusual number for Casa Adobe; but clearly an unusual gathering. Nicaragua, Ghana, Ecuador, Jamaica, India, United States, Romania, Argentina, Korea, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Indonesia, and El Salvador were all represented around the table. The occasion? The annual retreat of the Networking Team of the *International Fellowship for Mission as Transformation*, a global movement whose members believe that theology is for life and not merely for academia and research.

INFEMIT defines itself as follows: *Called and equipped by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we are a Gospel-centered fellowship of mission theologian-practitioners that serves local churches and other Christian communities so we together embody the Kingdom of God through transformational engagement, both locally and globally.*

Imagine what a privilege it is to explore together with such a richly diverse group what it means to live as God’s people, as citizens of God’s kingdom that so far transcends the interests of any one nation-state or people group! The team, which I (Ruth) coordinate, is tasked to strengthen regional fellowships that, like the *Latin American Theological Fellowship*, gather in local chapters and regional consultations to reflect together about how the Good news of God’s love can be made visible in different realms of life, and to produce materials that will contribute to that purpose. We build on the pioneering work of people like Kwame Bediako, David Gitari, Rene Padilla, Melba Maggai, Vinay Samuel, and many others. And we especially celebrate the involvement of young people who are full of energy, creativity, questions, proposals and commitments to help make God’s good purposes visible here and now. Check out www.ftl-al.org, www.ocms.org and www.infemit.org (under construction).

Casa Adobe grows

Adobe is the packed-together and sunbaked mud out of which many rural homes in Latin America are built. Simple dirt fashioned into

building blocks. We've chosen to name our family home "Casa Adobe". Because we recognize that we too are mere dirt being built up together into a welcoming community in which, we pray, God may dwell.

Morning prayers and weekly house church gatherings blend in with much cooking and hosting, some gardening and a neighborhood tutoring program run by our teen-age kids. In a context profoundly scarred by immigration and conflictive internal and international relations, we continue seeking to strike roots in local soil while also fostering renewed relations between people from the North and the South so that together we may more faithfully live as Christ's followers in the world.

The most recent addition to our community is a young family from El Salvador, refugees of the arbitrary violence that earlier this year left their brother dead and was threatening to end their lives too. Roberto is already taking on responsibilities with the Institute and Rita will soon be heading up some projects with the women in our neighborhood.

A trying year

Towards the end of 2010, we celebrated our wedding anniversary and thanked God for ten years of rich family life as we blended families and parented our six kids. Well, that was the calm before the storm! And 2011 proved to be one of the most trying times of our lives on the family front. During Home Service and in personal messages throughout the year we have shared the challenges we faced with many of you, and treasured your prayers. Now, as we draw near the end of 2011, and we have

celebrated yet another anniversary, we continue appreciating your prayer support in relation to the following:

- Our grandbaby, Sasha (almost 2), is happily adjusting to life with dear friends Seth and Tracy, who are currently co-guardians and live in Cambridge, MA.

- Our eldest daughter, Maya (22), continues living in the Boston area, trying to find her way in life.

- Our eldest son, Anton (19), has suffered from depression during this year and found it difficult to keep up with school. He is now heading out on his own and expecting to live, work and start up school in the US.

- The other four, Jonathan (18), Maria Isabel (16), Luana (15) and Natalia (14) are learning and growing, enjoying school and friends, soccer, music, and air acrobatics.

- Oscar, the young man who has 'adopted' us as parents spent most of this year in Nicaragua. He is returning home next week and hopes to reintegrate into our family and start up school.

- As parents, we continue needing to learn to parent with love, wisdom and hope in times of calm and in those other ones!



With gratitude,
Jim and Ruth Padilla DeBorst
with Maria, Luana, Natalia, Jonathan and Anton

Would you please pray and consider if you are able to support our ministry? You can donate by check for Padilla DeBorst (2850 Kalamazoo Dr SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560) or online (www.crcwm.org/donate).

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