

Twin Peaks

From the Padilla-DeBorst

April 2010

The gift of encounter

She approached me with a bright smile and excitement in her voice. "I am so glad to meet you personally!" Well, you see, we had already had an encounter of sorts. We had once been in the same place at the same time: she was one of some sixteen thousand students and young graduates who had heard me speak at Urbana 09 on *Jesus moves into our neighborhood*. But we were now thousands of miles away from St Louis, in Cairo, Egypt. "I went to Urbana wondering what God wanted of my life, she continued. But your talk helped me see things more clearly. So here I am, serving the children, women and men in the garbage dump. Thanks for inspiring me to come!"

Actually, I am the one who is grateful! Let me explain: I continue to wrestle with the value of big gatherings, one-off talks with no opportunity for follow-up, speaking to so many people I can never meet personally nor engage with more deeply. But Helen's words inspire me to see that though I might never have met her personally, we had had an encounter of sorts, or rather, that through my talk -and by God's grace~, she had had an encounter with her Lord that shaped her life choices. What a humbling, awesome charge I'm given when I step up to the podium!

Can I ask you to partner with me in prayer as I continue to wrestle and respond to similarly awesome and humbling opportunities to connect God's Word with God's people and our lives in God's world?

- Keynote address at the Uniting General Council World Alliance of Reformed Churches, on June 19 in Grand Rapids, MI.

- Biblical expositions at the Triennial Council of World Vision, August 21-26 in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

- A biblical exposition on Ephesians 2 and daily accompaniment of other speakers at the Lausanne Congress, October 16-25 in Cape Town, South Africa.

- Plenary talk at Boston 2010 Student Mission Conference, November 2-7 in Boston.

May these become opportunities for life-marking encounters for all of us, like Urbana 09 was for Helen.

New house and big dreams

Exactly a year after we moved into our first place in Costa Rica we moved into the second. But this one is different. For starters, it is ours. In addition, it is an old place in a rather run-down neighborhood. It has a rickety roof and a few leaks here and there. However it sits on a good-sized lot with fruit trees and plenty of space for more rooms, but also for compost and a vegetable garden. It has huge potential as a place where we can live out our Christian commitment to engage in right relations with our neighbors and with the rest of creation!

We dream that eventually this place will become a welcoming home, not just for the members of our family but also for others in need of home. And we yearn to learn and model more sustainable forms of living by gardening, using solar and wind power, and

recycling grey waters. So we are adding on a wing of rooms and have plans for some small apartments with workshop/store-front space as a start up option for some family ready for support in order to get ahead in life.

We look forward to continue hosting many friends, students and interns. And we welcome anyone with experience or know-how in “green” building and gardening. Want to enjoy some time in Costa Rica in exchange for your expert advice? Want to pray with and for us as we step ahead in this “crazy” project?

God’s Earth Day

The thirsty land drinks in the long-awaited rain this new April in Costa Rica. The skies are washed, the fields nourished. The very heavens tell the wondrous work of God, in the poet’s words (Psalm 19). They do so by fulfilling the life-giving purposes of the God who creates and sustains all forms of life. Of the God to whom the whole earth belongs, and all that is in it (Deuteronomy 10.14; Psalm 24.1 and I Corinthians 10.26). Of the God who so loved the world –not only humans—that he sent his Son so that he would reconcile all things through his life, death and resurrection.

This April 22nd, hundreds of movements and thousands of people the world round will celebrate Earth Day, an event that has been organized for 40 years now in order to bring awareness about the urgent need to care for our planet-home. The sad picture, however, is that this April, as in so many before, is more a month of lament than of celebration. Slow, too slow, we’ve been –especially as Christians—to recognize that care of the Earth is an unavoidable dimension of our mission and a

clear expression of our love for God and for our neighbor. How can we affirm that we love God when we are incapable of protecting, administering with sensitivity and common sense, and seeking the wellbeing of all that belongs to him? When our greedy ‘progress’, our unstoppable consumption, our guilty indifference put at risk the very survival of the Earth along with millions of vulnerable people?

This April, would you join our voices in lament and confession? Are we willing to take practical steps of loving stewardship, saving, recycling, re-using, reducing our consumption? Can we join hearts, minds and hands with those who defend the Earth –not in order to idolize nature but to worship its Maker? Check out: The Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church www.crcna.org/pages/justice.cfm; the Christian conservation movement *A Rocha* www.arocha.org; www.blessedearth.org; the Micah Network; and the next issue of the *Journal of Latin American Theology*, which contains five Bible expositions on Care of Creation. (Contact the editor, Lindy Scott: lscott@whitworth.edu). Let’s contribute so that the heavens, the Earth, and all that is in it, may continue sustaining life and so reflecting God’s glory!

With gratitude,

Ruth and Jim Padilla-DeBorst

with Anton, Jonathan, Maria, Luana and Natalia

Family news: Grandbaby Sasha Lillyana was born Feb. 28 in Cambridge, MA. She is healthy and Maya is a great Mom! But Medford, MA is TOO far from us!

Apartado 349-1002, San José, Costa Rica
Ruth CRWM: rpadilla-deborst@crcna.org
Jim: jpadilladeborst@gmail.com
Padilla DeBorst family: jimruthpdb@gmail.com