

## The Ripple Effect

July – August 2018

In the movie “Gladiator”, Marcus Aurelius, the Roman general, says, “*Alas, what we do in life echoes in eternity.*” I like those words, for the older I get the more I see the truth locked away in this statement. Our actions are like a rock casually tossed into a pond, resulting in radiating ripples which eventually lap gently against the banks. What we do today will touch eternity. Occasionally we get the privilege of seeing the eternal ripples in motion this side of heaven.



In 2005 my Mom and Dad moved from Santa Cruz to our new Monte Blanco Camp and Conference Center to live and work. Mom’s lung problems loved the dry, moderate climate after decades of struggling in the damp and molds of the tropics. The weather energized her, and she began to look around to see what she could do. In a very short time she observed that the kids across the road from our camp were not attending Sunday School nor church and so she determined to do something about it. She began inviting the children to come to Sunday School in her living room. Soon she elicited help from Frank, the young farmer at camp. The group quickly grew from a handful of kids to a rowdy bunch of more than 30. Mom and Frank continued this ministry for three years together. Then Frank moved on for other work and Mom’s health began to limit her involvement.

Earlier this year Ceci and I ran into an old friend who told us about Frank and his ministry to kids in the city of El Torno, a town about 20 miles southwest of Santa Cruz. Frank dubbed his ministry **Camp Jean Ramsey** (Camp JR). We met with Frank the other night and he shared the ripple effect Jean had on his life. Twice a year with earnings he gets from his small construction company, he takes over 100 high schoolers from the city public school system to camp. He uses a two-story building in the countryside to house them and pays for people to run the program. Cots were donated by a local hospital. Most of these kids come from broken and needy families and Frank covers all the costs (about \$15 per camper). In addition, he spends time during the year in personally counseling the teens.



Ironically, before Frank met Mom, he disliked kids. He shared with us how Jean Ramsey helped him discover his love for kids and their desperate need for Jesus Christ. On July 3<sup>rd</sup> Frank was awarded a Certificate of Recognition from the Bolivian Police Command in the city of El Torno for his contribution to the wellbeing of the children of their community through Camp Juana Ramsey. So here we are 12 years later seeing the ripple effect of a life well lived.

Juan Garcia is another case of a ripple effect. Almost 12 years ago, LATCOM began to scholarship his medical studies. We had no idea that one day he would use medicine to reach out to his own people as a missionary. In this past year and a half Juan has led a team to start outreaches and Bible studies in ten unreached Chiquitano communities. God is allowing him to use his unfinished medical training to take the Gospel where foreign missionaries would have a hard time gaining trust. Yet, we don’t know where these ripples will stop.

Thirteen years ago, Hume Lake Christian Camps helped us train our first camp leaders and now we have hosted over 70,000 campers and witnessed over 32,000 people make life-changing decisions in our auditorium. Hume's logo is of concentric circles of water radiating out, symbolizing their commitment to touch the world far beyond the borders of their camp in the High Sierras of California. Their training touched our small pond in Bolivia and, with what they taught our staff, we are now radiating out to the farthest points of Bolivia and into other countries.

In 1981, Ceci and I traveled throughout Central America teaching seminars on how to program and administrate Christian Camps. We spent five weeks working in Guatemala and how ironic is it, that now a fellow ministry will be sending youth leaders from Guatemala to Monte Blanco in September to learn the model of camp programing we are doing? The ripples continue.

Here are some of this year's ripples:

- In the first six months of 2018 Monte Blanco has hosted 1,352 Jr. and Sr. High School students from 13 schools. Of those, 1,257 have gone forward in our chapel; 424 made a commitment to change some aspect of their lives, 302 recommitted their lives to the Lord, and 531 accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- At the end of June, we hosted a training retreat for Bolivia pastors called **Metanoia** (Greek for a *transformative change of mind*). This is a new program in which we hope to help Bolivian church leaders think of new and Biblical ways of transforming their ministries. We had such favorable responses that Metanoia is to become an annual event.



- In eastern Bolivia, our REDES leaders have been working on discipleship in an innovative way. Traditionally, if a church wants to grow, it encourages its members to go out and evangelize and invite people into the structure of the church for discipleship. For some the process starts in small group meetings in an individual's home. As a person grows, he is then invited to join a baptism or confirmation class with the hope that he will eventually become part of the local church. The model follows this order: evangelism leads to discipleship which then leads to belonging to a group (the church). Our REDES folks here in Bolivia have chosen to invert this

order. They form relationships first and invite people to be part of a group meeting in the local community building. There discipleship begins as people study the Bible chronologically. Through the Old Testament stories, they gradually come to understand their need for salvation and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. This is not unlike how Jesus did it in the Gospels. Jesus first invited a group of men to follow him (belonging to a group) where he disciplined them, (not in a formal infrastructure, but on the dusty roads of Palestine, while camping in the wilderness, or on the Sea of Galilee). Here they came to know Him and through understanding who He was, they chose to accept Him as the only way to salvation (evangelism). The results of this model

for “church growth” in Jesus’ time transformed 12 men who turned world history on its end. It is this same model that is bringing about the phenomenal people movement we are now experiencing among the Chiquitano people (ten new groups in the last year and a half in the Lomerio, and four around Concepción). Belonging (relationship) ripples into discipleship which results in salvation. Those same new believers are now the ones carrying the Gospel to their neighbors and nearby communities. Jesus took only three years to accomplish his ministry on earth and its effectiveness has rippled down through the ages to reach us and carry us on into eternity.



You folks, our donors and prayer partners, are the ones who have helped us launch these highly effective ministries whose results touch eternity. **You** are the catalyst, **the rock**, that is disturbing the pond and bringing thousands annually to life-changing truth in Jesus Christ!

Thank you! Stand with us as we seek to reach even more people through both traditional and innovative methods for transforming lives.



#### Here are a few ways we specifically need your help:

- Monte Blanco swimming pool is only 1/3 of the way toward breaking ground. This pool will draw even more schools, churches, and local people to our facility where we can share the Gospel. Remember that for the past two years over 93.4% percent of the campers attending our programs are making decisions for Christ.
- LATCOM short-term team members just dedicated one more playground on Saturday, July 14<sup>th</sup>. This was in the village of El Púquio, in the Lomerio. Playgrounds are serving as a highly effective way to build relationships with community leaders who then grant LATCOM missionaries permission to hold Bible studies in the community buildings and schools. Each playground costs around \$4,500 dollars.





- The general REDES program needs funding: Bibles need to be purchased, fuel and medicine is needed for visitation to isolated communities, further training is needed for emerging leaders and the Vasquez, Rojas, and Garcia families (national missionaries to the 132 Chiquitano communities) desperately need ministry vehicles and further support to better accomplish their work.



Monte Blanco Camp needs partners to help fund and/or work on maintenance projects. Many of the adobe buildings are over 50 years old and in constant need of repairs, plastering, and painting. Carpenters are needed to build benches, stands, and other furniture. New mattresses need to be purchased (imagine having 70,000 teens sleeping on them). The kitchen needs to be updated. Volunteers willing to be handy-folks are welcome.

Once again thank you for your prayers and support.

*Tim and Ceci Ramsey*

Tim and Ceci Ramsey for the LATCOM Team



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