

# GRACIE'S UPDATE

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GRACIE MICHEL JR, NEVADA SARA SARA 1 15 DPTO, 301 SAN MIGUEL LIMA, PERU grace.michel@gmail.com

The holiday season has come and gone and a new year of life has begun in Peru. During the holidays I got to experience new traditions and new places. A special visitor (see picture at right) came and we traveled together and saw parts of Peru I've never seen before. It was a magical time of year.

As I settle into 2009 I feel like I am starting to catch a rhythm of life here, and it's getting busier by the minute. One may ask, "what is a typical day like in the life of Gracie?" Well, 3 days a week I trek out to San Juan de Lurigancho on the good ol' #17 bus. It is there where I am most directly involved with ministry to Lima's marginalized population. I make visits to friends I've made in the community to talk and pray with them. But my work really varies from week to week. Last week I spent hand-delivering invitations to the pastors of the churches we work with for an upcoming Pastor's breakfast. It's been really fun to get to know all the different neighborhoods and churches. God has been showing me that the need in San Juan de Lurigancho is not for more churches; there are a lot of them here, mostly small storefront churches of various denominations. Rather, the need is for the churches to have a perspective that looks outward toward the community and for unity among the different churches, so they can work together to address the issues in their neighborhoods. Paz y Esperanza has a unique role in connecting the different churches and facilitating opportunities for them to serve their community together. Next month we're starting a series of seminar/workshops on Monday and Tuesday nights focused on helping people become "Agents of



hanging out with my good friends in the neighborhood of Mariategui. Pictured left to right front: Casio, Ofelia, Daniel, Emmanuel, Norma and her daughter Maria. Back: my boyfriend Cameron (my special visitor) and me

Transformation"—to help seek the welfare of their community and society. This our task as children of God and citizens of Christ's kingdom.

The other 2 days a week I spend working in Paz y Esperanza's national office and my jobs there are more related to our work at a national and international level. I am helping coordinate a new volunteer program for Peruvian youth to learn about holistic ministry and put it into practice. I am also on the planning team for an international conference that we have coming up in April where young people from all over Latin America will be gathering together in Uruguay for 4 days to learn from each other's ministry experiences. My job is fundraising for this event. I'm trying to learn how to put the "fun" back in fundraising!

I could really use your prayers for all of these activities, please see the next page for more specific requests. Thanks for your support!

I spent Christmas in a small city in the Peruvian highlands. From the balcony of our guesthouse you could watch the clouds roll in and out over the sturdy Andes mountains. The rain came and went and the sun dropped in and chapped my lips till they hurt, and the 3,000 meter altitude left us short of breath and lightheaded, but it was spectacular.

In Peru the people celebrate Christmas at midnight on the night of the 24th. After eating a feast of turkey stuffed with yummy ground beef and vegetables, potatoes, and applesauce they top off the night with 'paneton' (christmas cake) and hot chocolate. I thought I was going to miss out on the traditional dinner because we were traveling during Christmas, but the owner of the guesthouse invited us to join their Christmas dinner with all the workers. We ate Christmas dinner at a long table with about 20 other people—Peruvians and a handful of other wandering foreigners. We ate and toasted to a meal shared in family. In Peru you can meet someone in the morning and by the afternoon they are *primo* (cousin), *tia* (aunt) or *hermano* (brother). I am grateful to live in a country that opens up its arms to the foreigner. The US has a lot to learn from Peruvian hospitality.



**Above: *El Velo de la Novia*, a waterfall I visited over the holidays in La Merced, the high jungle of Peru, about 6 hours east of Lima.**

## Prayer Requests

**Pray for our upcoming pastor's breakfast this Saturday January 24, that many pastors will come and learn about our upcoming activities for the year and be motivated to get their congregations involved.**

**Pray that God would provide the funding for the upcoming conference in Uruguay in April.**

**Pray that God would give me a team of people to help me plan the Peruvian youth volunteer program and for clarity and creativity as we move forward with this project.**

**Pray for me to deepen in my identity in God.**

**One of the things I wrestle with a lot in Lima is reconciling the vast disparity between wealth and poverty that exists in this city and the fact that I work among the economically poor but have connections to the economically rich, and I myself have a very comfortable standard of living. In the midst of this God keeps reminding me that the most important thing is that I know who I am--that I belong to God, all I have is God's, and that to have integrity is to be the same person at all times, whether in a slum or in a mansion.**



**Above: My friend Lucy and I. She and I have been meeting together to encourage one another. She wants to become a missionary, pray for her in this process.**



**Above: A group of young people at our movie night in December. Please pray for God to raise up young people in San Juan de Lurigancho to be servant-leaders in their community.**