



PC(USA) Tours for EcoJustice

Donald Piggins - Retired

It began with an email offering from PC(USA) for a Peruvian tour focusing on the theological basis of ecological justice in a country with many challenges. I've been down roads like this before and thought I knew what to expect.

Instead God revealed what He brought me here to see: mothers and fathers thriving after the devastation of an earthquake, pastors who made power point presentations on what it means to be stewards of the Lord creation on this earth, families who live in reed-woven shelters in a place with little water and stone age toilets. We talked with a dairy that wants to separate waste solids from waste water because water is a precious commodity in Peru. One of our members astutely added that the "waste" solids were perfect for making soap. God put us together to share and use our heads in a way that pleases Him. As if the isolation and peace of a community of weavers in a place

"When we rolled into La Oroya, I thought it was Mordor with the ovens shut down for maintenance"

-Donald Piggins

where it was hard to walk up twenty feet without running out of breath was not enough, what we came to see were the smoke reducing ovens they'd built --- that morning! (adobe still dark and wet). Not only that, but they fed us fresh grilled trout and at least four of

the 200 or so varieties of potato in Peru. We all squatted together in a common space between houses with the gate closed to keep the cattle out. We visited a farm that was organic before that became a boutique term in agriculture, run by a guy who remembers life before DDT. It was a three-acre Eden that one of our members said was no surprise, it was merely the way it could or is supposed to. After that we saw a business grown by women who grew tired of listening to their husbands complain that all their woman's group did was talk. The business? A solar drying house for herbs and fruit with equipment to mill these into teas and spices that are unique enough to be in great local demand and are

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Kuzka and Facebook

WebSites

www.manosperu.org

www.fairtradeperu.com

www.kuzka.podbean.com

Red Uniendo Manos on

Facebook

www.partnersforjusttrade.org

www.pazyesperanza.org

highly praised by customers. I guess the men are sitting around doing the talking now; perhaps the women got them a flat screen and dish network.

When we rolled into La Oroya, I thought it was Mordor with the ovens shut down for maintenance. Gritty, gray, polluted beyond imagine; I couldn't get my arms around the concept of a smelter so big that it processes lead, gold, silver, tin, and more let alone conceive how many other substances are used in refining. I still can't believe I ate lunch there and prayed that I wouldn't see any gross deformities, but those ailments are insidiously internal, thus escaping the view by a tourist passing through. Who can run, let alone work, in a place like that? Sadly, the jobs pay well and the miners need them. Thus there's an atmosphere of the company town, albeit one that is always close to a rolling boil.

Is it all in vain? Once again God revealed the passion, faith and commitment of people we'd never met until we hit the road in Peru. I learned we are all missionaries; we are all on the receiving end. Thanks be to the Father.



EcoJustice Tour: (left to right) Joe Tobiason, Diane Waddell, Bill Soplatsky-Jarman, Adrian Fernandez, Donald Piggins, Kathleen Plate, Alice Patterson, Emanuel Solano, Jed Cobalt, Jacob Goad, Katie Holmes

Photo: Katie Holmes

United against Climate Change

Joseph Tobiason - YAV

On October 17, I joined in as Peru came together to share with their government and the world what climate change meant to them. The National Audience on Climate Change was held by the organization the Citizen's Movement against Climate Change (MOCICC). It was a day devoted to hearing the plight that global warming is inflicting on the Peruvian people and to prepare for the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.



Climate Change: nun from Puno signs her interest in ecological toilets

photo: Joe Tobiason

At the conference, people were given the opportunity to speak about the atrocities they were facing and stand in solidarity with others who were similarly struggling. One nun, from the Puno region, lamented to me about how the rivers in her town were polluted and how the children, that she worked with, were the ones who were suffering. This

was a sentiment held by so many people who are watching their lands and seasons change in their lifetime.

Throughout the audience, people stressed the need for governments to behave responsibly and to enforce environmental policy. One direct goal was to make the Peruvian government "assume a leading and effective role requiring industrialized countries most responsible for global warming."

The audience also specified the need for the use of indigenous knowledge. There are so many times that people automatically look to new technology for the answer, when there are methods or water use that have been employed for hundreds or thousands of years.

This manner of looking at climate change is also more holistic. Red partner ATIPAQ in Huancavelica is working with people in all of the varying altitudes to find ways to best utilize water for everyone.

This open-minded, "victories for all," way of thinking is what is needed at the UN Conference. This is a time when all countries, especially those with strong international clout, need to use their power for the good of the world, rather than just the good of their people. As a United States Citizen, I am ashamed that my country did not sign the Kyoto Protocol. This time around there needs to be strong support for what is good for all, not just personal interests. For more information, follow the [Presbyterian Church's Environmental Ministries](#) page and their [blog](#).

Turn Guns to Lego Crosses

Ginna Irby - YAV

I spend 3 of my 6 work days supporting the branch of Compassion International at the IEP Collique. I work with kids from age four to seventeen in a holistic educational and daycare program for children from the nearby Pueblos Jóvenes ("shantytowns"). It is a rewarding experience, but challenging in many ways, mostly because of the very different experiential and theological backgrounds from which we all come. Little by little, I am trying to figure out what my role is in this ministry.

The other day I think I may have had a small insight into my purpose there. For nearly all of these kids, violence has, in one way or another, broken apart their home. One of the 7-year-olds came in crying the other day because she was having hallucinations of her dead older brother. A year

ago, he had been shot and killed in front of her very eyes. I'm always uncomfortable with kids playing with guns, but in this context in particular, it is an incredibly inappropriate and hurtful manner of play. So a few days later, when several of the boys made lego-pistols and were "shooting" at everyone in the room, including the girl who'd been crying a few days ago, I asked them not to play a game that's about killing and hate but instead to use the legos to make something about life and love. This plea, which I make at least twice a week, usually falls on deaf ears, but this time, one boy stopped, thought for a minute, and began to take apart his gun. He carefully fashioned a cross out of the pieces and, with a proud smile on his face, placed it in my hands. Maybe that's my role here - to slowly help beat swords into plowshares. Or guns into lego crosses.

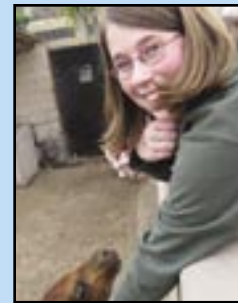


Photo Sarah Chancellor

Name: Ginna Irby

Nickname:

Ginna-no-me-gusta ("I don't like Ginna.") My 2-year-old host brother announces this at least once every meal. He's

an only child and having a hard time sharing his parents. It's just a phase.

Age: 22

Degree: Religious Studies, Music
University: College of William and Mary (Williamsburg, VA)

YAV placement: I am placed with the Fraternidad Cristiana Vida, a socio of the Red Uniendo Manos in Peru. I'm working with two churches in particular, the IEP Collique and the IEP Ingenieria.

Favorite part about peru: The mountains and the avocados.

PAMA Extended

Lourdes Zerraga - Lawyer

Recently, in the congress of the republic, a law was passed that that prolongs the term of completion of the last project of the PAMA (Program of Environmental Management and Mitigation), Doe Run Peru and its metallurgical plant in La Oroya.

When we refer to the PAMA, what are we referring to? First, it is the contract that was signed by Doe Run, when they took over the company in 1997, with the state for the metallurgical plant. It was a commitment that the business will not take more than 10 years to the day to start and complete a set program. In 2004, the state passed a law that allowed the businesses that have not completed the PAMA to prolong their time to complete it. And the only business that needed this and asked for this extra time was Doe Run. In 2005, they solicited for extra time and in 2006, the government granted the amplification to complete the PAMA and that was to be finished by October of 2009. At the end of this month, it will be the end of the first extension with Doe Run in which they were to complete the PAMA. But in August or July, one of the last months in which they were to be



photo: Katie Holmes

La Oroya: Blue skies for the first time in a long time thanks to the closed plant

completing the term, the business asked for another extension. The company then shut down the metallurgical plant, the workers returned home with 3 months pay, thus changing their perspective. After the 3 months of stoppages, all needed to work again and took command of the highways, which at times turned violent, once resulting in the death of a person.

Recently, the executive directly presented a suggestion of a change of rules to the congress of the republic on the 21st of September. The 120 congress people that make up the congress of Peru had in their hands a law to debate and decide whether or not to pass. Without much debate, congress voted to pass this law with the reasons of social repression and the current strikes. This is a law without many parts, it is very specific and one which, at least in our opinion, we find to be unacceptable. It is only about the theme of the construction of a sulfuric acid treatment plant and reworking of copper wire. It is something that cannot actually be a law. It is not possible to make a law that is only in favor of Doe Run. The civil society is making campaigns against this law and there is faith that a way can be found to bring this to the highest organizations with regards to the unconstitutionality of this law.

I hope that in this moment we can join with the organizations of social support against these injustices.

Paz y Esperanza

Sarah Chancellor - YAV

Paz y Esperanza is a non-governmental organization with offices all over Peru that serves local communities by educating people and fighting against human rights violations. In Huanuco, one of Peru's poorest districts, there are a high number of domestic abuse cases and especially instances of sexual abuse against children. Therefore, the focus in Huanuco is on human rights, especially women's rights.

Here lawyers, pastors, counselors, journalists, and more meet the needs of those victims. They offer counseling, both psychological and spiritual, provide legal help for those who wish to press charges and legally separate from their abusers, as well as provide social services to help meet the basic needs of the families. They help raise awareness and educate the community on everything from human rights issues to safe sexual practices and have programs for everyone from the graying grandmas to the babies strapped to their mother's backs by brightly colored shawls.

Pazy Esperanza is just that, peace and the hope of the community and I for one am very honored and excited to be working with such compassionate and caring people who really and truly care for their fellows and live out their faith in the work they have been called to do.



Photo: Sarah Chancellor

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<http://www.partnersforjusttrade.org>

Modern “colonialism” of the markets

Alexandra Buck - Bridge of Hope

October 12th is known in many countries as “Columbus Day” to celebrate Christopher Columbus’ voyage to the discovery of the Americas. But this “discovery” of a continent of people (with thousands of years of previous existence) is not a celebratory event in many parts of the Americas. Columbus, in Spanish “Cristobal Colón”, represents “Colonialismo”, or colonialism and the beginning of over 500 years of economic, cultural, religious and social repression, and the deaths of millions who were considered sub-human and heathens.

This legacy of foreign domination and economic exploitation lives on through unjust trade policies like NAFTA, CAFTA and the US-Peru Free Trade Agreement, which crush small farmers, impede food sovereignty, weaken local governance, and perpetuate dependency.

This October 12th, [PC\(USA\) and other justice organizations](#) throughout the hemisphere took action to re-make history by celebrating International Trade Justice Action Day.

PC(USA) and over 300 civil society organizations support an initiative in Congress to create a Fair Trade policy. Called the TRADE Act (Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment Act), it is a way of ensuring

that everyone benefits from a trade relationship. It re-examines existing trade treaties and sets up structures to enforce labor rights, environmental protections, community development, and local government sovereignty.

In Peru, the effects of the bilateral trade agreement with the US have been literally lethal in a very obvious way this year. Many parts of the US-Peru Free Trade Agreement were fast-tracked through the Peruvian Congress without consulting Indigenous communities, thus affecting their ancestral land, and felt they were inimical to their wellbeing, so they protested the laws. The government, in the name of development, quelled the protest with force, leaving many indigenous protestors and police dead in Bagua in June.

In much subtler ways, every day, the Free Trade Agreement takes affect in Peru. Lower wages, more import dependency, curtailed land rights, conflicts over water and other natural resources. The Red (Joining Hands



Photo: Alexandra Buck
Fair Trade: Women from the cooperative Tupac Yupanki crochet their work

Network Peru) along with its associates, are working every day to create more justice. We see the disastrous results of that in the Bagua massacre in June and the continuing quagmire of Doe Run Peru in La Oroya.

Trade doesn’t have to be negative. In fact, trade is a beautiful, I would even say sacred, act. Exchanging gifts and sharing what one has with another person in justice, solidarity, and respect is one of the most tangible things we can do to be in right relationship with our neighbors.

As you and I continue building a relationship of solidarity between Peruvians and US Americans, please take some time to reflect on what October 12th means to you and what you can do to encourage right relationships in trade.



Photo: Joe Tobiason
All Smiles: A boy chases pigeons at the Convent San Francisco

Kuzka & Facebook

Joseph Tobiason - YAV

One of the goals of the Red Uniendo Manos and the Joining Hands Networks in general is to create strong connections between people. Therefore we are happy to announce a few new additions to our means of communication.

There is now *Kuzka*, the Podcast for the Red. It will be a bi-monthly collection of stories and reports from people in and around the Red. To listen, please visit <http://www.kuzka.podbean.com>. In order to be up to date on when new episodes come out, please subscribe through itunes, google, yahoo, or any other RSS or ATOM feed by clicking the links on the right or just keep checking back to the site.

We also are now operating a facebook fan page. Just [click this link](#) or search “Red Uniendo Manos.” This will hopefully become a place where we can discuss what is going on as well as share pictures and stories of the Red.

The relationships we are trying to make goes two ways. Please tell us what is going on and what we can do better. Thanks