



Peru Workshop, Week 2, January 26, 2019

GREETINGS ONCE AGAIN FROM OUR THATCHED-ROOF WORKSHOP

The seats were emptier this week, as one by one the teachers had to leave for the District Educational Office to present their documents and apply for a teaching position for 2019. In Peru, most teachers are contracted year by year, and a complicated merit system gives preference to those rating high. Thus there is fierce competition among teachers to score well on qualifying exams, and then to land a desirable assignment. Those assigned to the hardship posts (far-away schools) receive a bonus, which makes them desirable for some. However, most teachers have families and elderly parents to consider and hope to be assigned close to home. All sorts of jockeying takes place, and not infrequently money is exchanged under the table. Our prayers went with our colleagues as they joined the long lines and waited anxiously to be called. Thus far, three of them have received satisfactory assignments.

In case you haven't realized, this workshop is being held in January-February because these are school vacation months in the southern hemisphere. We are in the middle of summer, which, in Amazonia, really means the height of rainy season. Day after day, torrents of water fall from the sky, thoroughly water-logging everything. The humidity nears 100%; anything made of leather molds; rivers flood. But good humor still prevails in our little classroom, and the tangle of fruit- and flower-bearing plants around us flourishes, producing scenes of lush beauty.

Fewer participants this week allowed me more time to sit with the Kakatibo teacher, who is far behind the others. He was unable to attend the workshop last year because he was writing the thesis for his teaching degree. By now he seems to have forgotten most of what he had learned about textbook development; he is also a very slow typist. However, he is persistent and willing, and I hope that with special help he can finish his book before the next school year starts and he has to return to his school.

The rest of the time I spend checking manuscripts: teaching progression, teacher instructions, punctuation, spelling, placement of drills, page numbering, alignment of margins and columns, illustrations – the myriad tedious details that go into turning any draft manuscript into a good book. It isn't interesting to write or read about, but it's a step that can't be skipped if children are to learn to read their mother tongues and eventually God's Word.

I am grateful for your prayers and support this week. It has been lovely to receive little notes from many of you. Please keep holding us up.

- Pat Davis