

March 18, 2008

Dear Urantia Book Community,

This is Gerald Pando from Oklahoma currently in Bogotá Colombia. It is my desire to give a short summary of my Urantia Book activities in Bogotá during my first 10 days.

First, the El Libros de Urantia donated by the Oklahoma Society and George Thornbury in Kentucky arrived safely and was passed to Patricia Rozo, founder of EXITO VERDE, a foundation dedicated to improving the material and spiritual conditions by emphasizing environmental and social relationships with the planet of all who live here.

Second, my primary mission is to repair the TEUSAQUILLO house occupied by EXITO VERDE that is used as a center for community outreach. The house has over 10K sq. feet, 4 bathrooms, 6 bedrooms, a 20x60 classroom, large kitchen, a 40x40 patio, 2 large living areas and 4-car garage. We began 4 projects: 1) repair portions of the roof that are leaking, 2) add hot water and expand the bath on the 1st floor for public use (currently located under the stairs), 3) remove the sagging wood floors on the 1st floor and fill an 18" space with concrete debris, cap with a concrete floor and install 18" ceramic tile and, 4) raise the rear classroom roof to repair leaks that evident during recent rain/hail storms.

Third, my trip is to emphasize relationship with all Urantia Book readers in Colombia. To this end Bibi and I renewed friendships with Carlos Zapata (first reader in Colombia to be my friend) and Juan B and Marta Garcia readers who visited us last summer in Oklahoma. Juan has graciously volunteered his Civil Engineering experience to the repairs at the Teusaquillo house. These 2 were listed in the International Urantia Book Study Group directory (that I still carry), and have been critical to achievements realized.

Carlos told us of an Urantia presentation on Saturday by Juan Fernando Petro, an 18-year reader entitled "La Ciencia al Encuentro de Dios". The topic, translated "A Scientific Encounter with God" was a powerful presentation on the Scientific Proof of God's existence especially supporting the co-existence of EVOLUTION and CREATION. Mr. Petro heads a group called "Grupo Estudio Avanzado de Urantia-GEA" (Advanced Study Group of Urantia-GEA). 75+ persons attended this presentation. Bibi and I were fortunate to meet many of these readers, and invited them to an "OPEN HOUSE" at the Teusaquillo house the following day. Today Mr. Petro called to say he has donated 2 DVDs one on his group and the other on his presentation. These may be used at IC-08 in Los Angeles and placed on websites in the US and other Spanish speaking countries.

On Sunday, March 15 we expected 20 attendees at the open house at Teusaquillo. We had called and invited everyone we knew along with the new acquaintances from Saturday. To our surprise, we had 44 persons attend and everyone enjoyed lunch and 2-4 hours of socializing. In attendance were Juan Fernando Petro, the presenter from Saturday, Alvaro Gomez who opened the presentation and leads the Urantia Readers of Bogotá. Also attending was Maria Caroline Nino, a physician who also leads Urantia Groups in Bogotá. I told them of my dream of advertising in El Tiempo, Bogotá's largest newspaper that URANTIA readers meet regularly (maybe Saturday at 10am?) where all readers and new readers could meet. I would like the Foundation, Fellowship and other interested readers to jointly sponsor this monthly ad. My idea was positively received. I also offered the use of the meeting facilities at the Teusaquillo house for their meetings.

I cannot list all attendees but want to especially mention Carlos Zapata, Myrian Montanez (who I first met at IC96 in Arizona) and of course Patricia Roza who has managed the Teusaquillo property for over 2 years and coordinated the programs at EXITO VERDE. Overall, this meeting totally exceeded our expectations, not only in attendance but also in promoting RELATIONSHIPS to work individually but jointly to spread the Urantia message to the community. Sadly, Jose Manuel Rodriguez and Juan B/Marta Garcia could not attend due to other commitments but hopefully will be available in the future.

On Sunday morning before the Teusaquillo open house, Bibi had printed 100 invitations to an OPEN HOUSE on April 20th at 3pm. Surprisingly that date (2 days before our return to the US) coincided with the 7th year anniversary of EXITO VERDE. We accepted this coincidence and announced a 7th year EXITO VERDE Birthday party on April 20th, and invited all to attend. Hopefully the repairs to the roof, bathroom, installation of the ceramic tile and repair to the classroom roof will be completed by then.

Finally I thank Bibi, my Colombian wife of 3years, for her gracious support in coordinating all our activities in Bogotá; her ability to organize a sit-down lunch for 44people at a minimal cost by soliciting the service of her cousin, a professional chef. She also has coordinated repairs and managed funds (in pesos) at the Teusaquillo house with Juan B and his contractor Bladimir Jorge, and the purchase/delivery of several thousand dollars of materials from Home Center (Home Depot). She has been special in attending to the Urantia Readers, to the Teusaquillo house, but also to lovingly attending to me after successful surgery yesterday for a bad tendon on my left middle finger.

This completes my written report but want to attach some photos that represent our activities, family, friends and those who are supporting the Urantia revelation here in Bogotá. Possibly with the support of Buck Weimer, Mo Siegel, David Kantor or others can post this report on SocAdmin, Foundation News or other sites as appropriate. As things develop, I may post a subsequent report from Bogotá or may wait until my return to the USA in May.

Gerald Pando  
Bogotá Colombia

Attachments: #261-Bogota #262-Francisco, son of Patricia Roza & Chef  
#263-Chinazcua Group #264-Myriam, Carlos & Catalina  
#268-Myriam & Patricia #270-Lunch at Teusaquillo House  
#271-Juan Fernando Petro #279-Construction Materials  
#280-Underfloor Fill #281-Teusaquillo Street  
#282-Teusaquillo House #292-Chila, the Teusaquillo pet  
#526-Partial Group photo #530-Gerald in hospital