

WSA CHAIR
SOUTH AMERICAN TRIP
November 11-21 2011

Bogota

Day I, Nov 11:

Arrived from Vancouver at 1100 pm on Nov.11 2011 11/11/11: An auspicious date/time. I received a warm welcome from Luqman and Angela his eldest daughter plus mystery driver (not actually in Subud) and was taken to beautiful hotel backed by the mountains behind Bogota.



With Amanda, Angela and Susannah Rivera

Day II, Nov 12:

I had breakfast with Luqman and Angela, talking about Subud Colombia, Amanecer and all the players, including Ismail, Luqman's vice chair, and Jorge Bustillo, the MSF/Enterprise Rep for Colombia (SC), or Muchtar Martins, past architect of Amanecer. We also spoke of the gloomy recent past history with its difficulties around contested land ownership and back taxes. The focus since my last visit one year ago has been on the successful formation of a new national committee and stabilizing Subud Colombia council

of ten (10) group chairs.

We arrived at the rambling, elegant 700m.sq. 2-story old Bogota Subud house by 10:30, to witness 120 members crammed in from all over Colombia: the whole SC National Dewan plus Council of 10 group chairs and full group representation from across Colombia, representing 400+ active members.

There was an enormous sense of letting go of the past turmoil of Amanecer, facing a new SC, restored and renewed, based on reconnected groups and members returning to full life and vigour, including younger members who, in particular, had become inactive during the prior uncertainties, and with funds flowing again to Subud Colombia and new hope



for Amanecer.

With Luqman Rivera, chairman of Subud Colombia

Day III, Nov 13:

I had breakfast with Luqman and Angela again, and we further reviewed the developments and history of Subud Colombia. We had a day of testing for SC chair, with new candidates encouraged to stand, but with Luqman

being reconfirmed as chair for another two years. There was great joy and new trust, so that a new chapter is unfolding. I departed later that afternoon for an overnight trip to Cordoba, Argentina (heading to Mina Clavero) via Lima.

Cordoba/Mina Clavero

Day IV, Nov 14:

I arrived in Cordoba after 15 hrs of travel and no taxi waiting to get to Mina Clavero! After three hours, I took a local taxi for 2.25 hours up through the mountain passes to Mina Clavero in the Cordilleras/foothills of the Andes. It is a beautiful tourist/resort town with the Subud group pioneering the establishment of a community on the edge of the town.

As I arrived the Zone 9 breakout meetings on groups, helpers, etc. were drawing to a close. That evening we had an entertainment time where many of us contributed songs, poems or even stand-up comedy in the beautiful latihan hall.



Interior of the Latihan Hall at Mina Clavero, designed by Muchtar Martins.

Day V, Nov 15:

The first full day in Mina Clavero in summer cottages near the MC Subud

centre and community, which is anchored by the round, Yurt-style latihan hall and adjoining group house, designed by Muchtar Martins. It is in a park-like setting, with Subud members' homes scattered across the land by the river.

Manuel, Grace (International Helpers), Paloma, Elisa and myself visited the separate Nono group located 15 kms away, to witness the start of the reconciliation that is taking place between Mina Clavero and Nono, recognizing past hurts and misunderstandings. The group of ten (10) members is nestled in the woods also near a river. We were welcomed respectfully and shared a late afternoon latihan and some testing with the men and women. We returned to Mina Clavero feeling that indeed the tide had turned – we even felt it in the latihan that some weight had been lifted.

In Mina Clavero during the wrap up of the Zone 9 gathering we had a sharing circle where Hadani, Miranda, Grace and I gave a presentation on the upcoming Americas Gathering in Vancouver next June. Then I provided an overview on the international WSC/WSA organization and our current project priorities (Archives; fundraising; enterprise; international centres, translations etc.)

Day VI, Nov 16:

I thought I would be leaving the next day, but discovered it was this day! So I was a day out in my schedule and had to rebook with the help of Elisa, Mauricio and Paloma.

After the visitors had returned to Brazil, Chile and Buenos Aries, I spent

a wonderful afternoon with Efrain, visiting the town for an informal lunch and then a marvellous walkabout on his 50 ha of land across the river from Mina Clavero.

Noted the unique Efrain and Regina relationship living in separate houses allowing each other space. They are each helping the other to build a new valley hacienda for her, and a mountain rim retreat nearby for him. Efrain was told by Bapak that whatever he was confronted by, he could work at and be successful with. This shows in his approach to the development of Clavero's next phase.

Santiago

Day VII, Nov 17:

Left MC at 9:00, after rushed exit before getting on the mountainous road for the two hour drive to Cordoba and the 16:30 flight over the sparkling 6000m. High Andes to Santiago, Chile.



Renato Sotelo, chairman Subud Chile

After a 1.5 hour journey, I was warmly

greeted on a beautiful summer's day in gleaming Santiago by Sarah Becker, ex IH now Care Support Team (CST) member, and Renato Sotelo, Subud Chile national chair. We dropped by the Subud house to find two young members building an archive database in the beautifully arranged old archives room located by the front door. I was struck by Very how symbolic and significant this was - youth taking care of Subud's legacy – and I told them so! I was taken to my lovely small hotel in the chic Providencia district near the Subud house, then to dinner by Sarah and her husband Laksar, with their eldest daughter.



With the Beckers

Day VIII, Nov.18:

Mid morning I skyped with Annabella Ashby and Sarah about CST; Annabella needing reassurance on adopting a less onerous role within the CST team, despite challenges with her own life and aging father to be cared for. Wonderful feeling of being helped to a new way of having the team be more fluid and self-sustaining; not imposing too rigorous demands on ourselves – but being more at ease with greater

flexibility of operations..taking care of ourselves as we help others.

We then had lunch with Laksar, back briefly from his office, then Sarah, her daughter and I set off on a day trip to Valparaiso, an old port city alongside Vina del Mar chic retirement/tourist town, 100 kms south of Santiago. It represented the flavour of the two Chiles – one, older and mercantilist, somewhat run-down, but full of life; the other the chic, modern resort/retirement community next door embodying the new Chile. That evening, the whole group gathered at an Italian restaurant for a huge meal! Chile has an almost ideal mix of young and older members, so that the 20+ person meal, with its enormous pasta and pizza portions, was an equal balance of 20-30 something year-old and 50+ demographics. A group happy to socialize together at the least opportunity!

Day IX, Nov19:

My final day started late after a late night. After breakfast, Renato (en route to a soccer game.) took me to my requested stay with Manuel and Susilawati in their almost-country cottage on the SE edge of Santiago. On arrival, I had an extraordinary sense of deja vu, as if I was going back to Coombe Springs after 52 years! The front gate was an identical miniature and the garden so like the gardens at Coombe that I played in as child in the late 1950s.

We had a wonderful coffee time in the garden followed by lunch and reminiscences of Coombe, Bennett in South America, Bapak travels in Chile as well as key issues for now. Then a brief siesta before going off to the

group latihan-testing-social, and for me to 'sing for my supper'. Latihan followed by testing on: How do we face the One Almighty and follow? How much do we trust God? What helps/hinders us? How is our inner/outer courage? Then the talk about this Colombia-Argentina-Chile trip; Amanecer/Subud Colombia; Mina Clavero; a short talk (with a wonderful feeling of attentive lovingness among the 40 of us gathered..) that opened up perspectives from the trip and the from the WSA chair. Looking at Subud Chile's and Santiago's future development and the opportunity to develop a full Subud Chile national centre based on the magnificent but aging Providencia Subud house.

Then the way way ahead, referencing Ibu's exhortation to begin again to make a fresh start with international enterprises to return to the source with Bapak's Talks; to have courage and be diligent; to wake up and Begin (again)!

We also talked of the Americas Gathering in June in Vancouver as a prelude to World Congress 2014 in Puebla, as a celebration of who we are. A time for sharing our Subud culture.



Renowned minstrels from the Santiago group – Rachmat Becker and Pedro Delano.

Next we had some singing and a children's version of Aesop's 'never cry wolf' fable that had a symbolism for us now that we are reawakening. It was a wonderful evening of sharing our realities.

Late to bed again at 1:00, after a late night bowl of soup together.

Day X, Nov 20:

Up at 6:00 for the flight to Bogota. Easy-going talk with Manuel en route to the airport, talking about how we are facing the new ways ahead. Then the 16:00 hrs. arrival in a now familiar Bogota, to be joyously met as if for the first time (again!) by Ismail, vice chair, and the delightfully helpful Angela, and Miranda on the national council.

Taken to an older district for an Asian fusion early dinner then, as my head drooped with fatigue (15 hours since I left Santiago), was taken back to that magnificent mountainside hotel for an earlier night, after Skyping Maxwell and some email updates. A restless night affected by the 2600m altitude and an alarm that pinged on events in other time zones...

Day XI, Nov 21:

5:00 finally arrived, then I went down to take a taxi to get to the 8:50 flight to Houston en route home. Ten (10) extraordinary days in 3-countries rooted in a huge new sense of the meaning of love and trust for us as we face Almighty God, to awaken to the new challenges before us.

Main Issues for this trip:

Subud Colombia full of energy and deep sincerity beginning a new phase of renewed national support; a

completely new level of trust and support for a revitalized organization/funding after a difficult period before. Mutual support for Subud Colombia + Amanecer and the new Cor(poracion) Amanecer strategy around new enterprises.

Subud Argentina wonderfully strong deep energy, emerging from a period of some division around Mina Clavero/Nono; Buenos Aires divided groups, etc., but into an exceptional new growth possible around Mina Clavero, as some members return from Buenos Aires to live there. Also reconciliation in key groups including recognition for Nono as barriers come down from past hurts and misunderstandings and new trust being built.



Me and Subud Providencia (Santiago) members in the beautiful Art Deco-style Subud house.

Chile with its great strength based on a strong mixture of old and young members; a large Subud Santiago house and group with committed diligent members faced with the potential for renewing its Providencia group house and supporting paying off the La Florida' house MSF loan to build support. Subud Chile supporting growth of new smaller groups up and down its extraordinary 4000 km. north-

south axis.

Past weaker links between larger main Providencia and smaller La Florida groups being recognized. New projects sought to build Subud Chile's presence in the world. To be proud enough to perhaps (my challenge to them!) 're-invite Bapak' or even the major of the city to re-open the restored Subud house.'

Big Five WSA Issues underlined by The South America Trip:

1. Subud houses/international - national centres – need to be at the heart of our communities...again;
2. Funding and stable finances – to approach this as an enterprise in order to stabilize our funding needs;
3. Next generation of enterprises needed - to address the challenges of funding Subud's work in the world. Stronger organizations to meet member's needs and support projects;
4. Subud presence in the world - made more evident by our actions together (see 'Subud Houses', 'Funding/Enterprise' etc.);
5. Archives and heritage being recognized and nurtured everywhere to strengthen us – profound Santiago image!

Love and blessings

Luke