

KUNKLE KNEWS

May 2011

Our commissioning service in Sacramento, California, in the summer of 1969 was a time of deep commitment, both for us and our friends and family who were present. The occasion was a bit teary, but without regrets. Ellen's father expressed that he would rather have his daughter thousands of miles away in the center of God's will than to have her living next door out of His will! We had a deep-seated peace in our hearts as we boarded the plane a few days later on our way to language study in Mexico. A year later, we were in Bolivia getting settled in the village of Urubicha where we ministered to the Guarayo Indians. Since that time, God has opened and closed doors before us as He has directed our lives. That old hymn, "I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go," has been more than just a song—it has been a way of life for us!

When we were reassigned to Bolivia, following a 17-year interval in Paraguay, our thought had been that we would finish out our missionary career there, but once again, God has, for now, closed the door for our return to Bolivia. Instead, He has opened to us the opportunity to minister on World Gospel Mission's American Indian Field in the Southwest.

We fully expect to be able to return to Bolivia in the future, perhaps as volunteers for whatever time God would enable us. For now, we have the assurance that comes from knowing we are in the center of God's will. By remaining in the area, we can address some family concerns while at the same time remain in active missionary service until our retirement in mid-2012.

As with each previous change of ministry, God is stirring our hearts with new challenges. We are burdened to reach out with assistance and encouragement to Native Americans. Veteran WGM missionary Clair Lund is introducing us to important contacts and areas of ministry on the reservations, for which we are very grateful.

Our home base will be in the city of Casa Grande, which is located right in the vicinity of the Gila River Indian Reservation. The large Tohono O'Odham Indian Nation lies just to the south, and near Yuma to the west is the Cocopah Reservation. WGM has ministries in other areas, but these are the ones closest to us and where we will be concentrating our efforts. We will also be involved in youth summer camps, an effective way to minister to Native American children and youth. There will be many more details to share after we are settled into our new assignment.

We have appreciated the loyalty of our support team as we have gone through changes in the past. Our original calling was to evangelize and plant churches among tribal peoples in Bolivia. It seems fitting that we should finish out our more than forty-year missionary career ministering to Native Americans right here in the Southwest. Your partnership with us means more than words can express. May God bless you as, together, we embark on this new venture!

With sincere appreciation,

Joe and Ellen Kunkle



Rev. and Mrs. Ray Stillings, pastors of the Cocopah Nazarene Church; Clair Lund; Ellen and Joe Kunkle

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