

Serving Peru with Family Values and Pure Love

Trevor Jones
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A kitchen in operation of Peruvian people

Generally, Peru is recognized as a third world nation where poverty levels have been above 50 percent for many years. According to the World Bank, Peru's poverty rate fell from almost 60 percent in 2004 to about 24 percent last year. This general level of poverty spurred the Family Federation to start the program of Family Centers (known locally as "comedor" or food kitchens).

Beginning in 2000, the members started visiting the poor districts in their cities to gather information from the local people and find groups who were willing to work with us to establish new comedors. Following an intense period of investigation and community meetings, we began to initiate these centers by donating cooking equipment, stoves, pans, etc., so that each group could make at least one hot meal a day for the families who became members of the centers.



The kitchens serve the spiritual and practical needs

The wives in these groups cooperated to raise money to buy the food and then worked to cook and serve the meals. Every day at least twenty families in each center were able to receive a good meal at a minimum cost (US 50 cents) per family.

Over the years of activity, we have been able to establish more than a hundred centers across the nation. In addition to providing this initial support, members visited constantly each Family Center to give education on Family Values and Pure Love. In this way, many of these group leaders were able to grow and develop their own hearts and understanding of the value of our teachings.

These places are not just community kitchens; rather, they are a family center where people are given physical food and spiritual food and education about how we can improve our quality of life in our homes and strengthen family and marital bonds. Attendance at these meetings has varied between ten-twenty people per family center, so on average the education fluctuates between a thousand and two thousand people in six months. The biggest challenge is to continue to educate our Peruvian society and because we do not want Peruvians to lose heart, we continue to educate more and more families; there is still plenty to do.

Also each year at Christmas members visit the centers and hold a "Chocolatada." This is a traditional Peruvian custom where *panetones* (Christmas cake, similar to, but much less dense than fruitcake) and drinking chocolate is shared with all the families in the Family Centers. Through this activity, many people have come to know our federation and respect its work. Local community leaders and district mayors have come closer to us and at times supported joint activities.

A testimony from the mother of one of the families: "Thank you very much for visiting this home. It gives me great joy to have you here. Thank you for the talks we received; what we have heard has been very helpful.

With the talks, we again discover what love is and it gives true meaning to marriage and shows how to act between a husband and a wife. Sometimes I was not very confident with my husband; now I can talk openly with him and together we can solve our problems diplomatically without getting upset, by seeking some reasons and explanations. Both of us have put an effort on our part to succeed, we are now living together happily, because these discussions have helped us enough to organize our home."