

## TRUST

### **Trust and positive thinking are an inalienable condition to live as a human being**

Nowadays it is difficult to trust. I read the following not a long time ago: "The trust is good, but a lawyer is better". There was another slogan saying "one lawyer is cheaper than no lawyer". The commercial message is good but we should not follow the philosophy of "if you think the worst, you will not be far wrong".

Obviously we do not alienate ourselves with a life based on ingenuity which could turn into irresponsibility, but that does not mean that we always have to think the worst. To think in one way or another makes our lives one way or another. The one who always mistrusts is limiting his horizons and lives under the shadow of fear.

We as an NGO would like to speak out in support of the trust and the positive thinking; that does not mean that everything is great and that we are not influenced by things affecting other people. It means that we commit ourselves to think that man is good by nature, as established by

## editorial

a superior being (called God or loving-God). The experiences we share show that we can live (and must live) in another way. The most disfavoured people who have nothing to lose and live for the moment, show us that trust and positive thinking is an inalienable condition to live as a human being.

In this publication, Stephanie explains us how she is willing to impregnate her live with more trust, as a result of her experience in Arequipa. In another context, Dr. Albrecht Ulmer shares with us a "non-politically correct vision about AIDS". People like Stephanie and Dr. Ulmer invite us not to go with the flow of mediocrity. They show us how to trust the human being, although most probably this will not bring any compensation in terms of power or economics. Many thanks for your commitment and testimony.

The Council

## HIV – FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE

**wealth = treatment and staying alive;  
poverty = illness and dying**

AIDS is one of the biggest catastrophes in the health sector in the last decades and has widened the gap between wealth and poverty. Since 1996 people in wealthy countries have access to HAART (Highly Active AntiRetroviral Therapy), a combination of very potent but also very expensive drugs which are obtaining healthiness and prolonging the lives of HIV patients so they won't die early and in agony.

Countries with limited resources cannot afford HAART. Even though treatment costs have been reduced from 15.000 € (i.e. in Germany) to 300 to 600 € there is an embarrassing truth that can't be denied: wealth means treatment and staying alive; poverty means illness and dying. By the end of 2007 only 33% of those who needed HAART got it (UNAIDS: Report on the global AIDS epidemic 2008, August 2008). And the need was estimated lower than experts in this country would recommend. Actually it was only about 10% of the HIV positive people.

Due to international campaigns the availability of treatment improved significantly again this year. On a visit in Tanzania in July 2008 I was told that everybody who needed treatment got it. I was impressed by all the decrees concerning HAART. But they used drugs we do not use anymore because of the side effects. Also being depended on the American PEPFAR and the Global Fund puts them at risk.

Already 13 years ago Prof. Andrieu from Paris stated that there is a much cheaper drug, Prednisolon, which is available all over the world and which can keep an HIV-infection under control. He wasn't taken serious and nobody bothered to verify his statements. But treating HIV patients at our medical practice we got the same impression using a dosage as low as 5mg at which side effects are almost not existent. With the help of action medeor treatment costs for a whole year would be 3 €. The first patients have been taking this drug for more 15 respectively 11 years. The statistical differences are significant. The need of starting HAART could be put off maybe for years.

## thoughts

Especially in countries where access to HAART is inadequate this could be a plus of years alive. Countries with limited resources would be a little less dependent.

But experts are not interested. They hide behind their scientific arguments: So far there hasn't been an official, externally controlled, double-blinded study with randomized allocation. There is no proof so we won't use this drug.

So we need this study but the field of research and further education (and therefore having a career in science!) greatly depends on the industry producing expensive drugs for HAART. Evidently they are not interested in reducing their profits by doing research on alternative and cheaper drugs. Our medical practice alone saved 25 Mio. € putting off HAART. Imagine this worldwide! But science doesn't seem independent. The study we ask for wasn't carried out.

16 years ago one of the leading specialists on brain-related matters, Prof. McGeer from Vancouver, stated that Ibuprofen could prevent Alzheimer's disease. He failed bringing a study on the way because Ibuprofen is so cheap and there are newer drugs promising more profit!

The world seems to be at a loss to actually see that kind of information without being blocked by a party with different interests. There is a real danger in innovative drugs that mean high profits. I can also see this for treatment of Hepatitis C and drug addiction.

Is there a conflict of interests between shareholders and humanitarianism? Is this something that should not only concern experts? What about politicians and the church?

There already is a church being concerned and taking action: A year ago the "Missionsärztliche Institut Würzburg" (Medical Missionary Institute of Würzburg) started a study at the university hospital of Mwanza, Tanzania. And for the experts: They don't need to worry, let's wait and see and in any case this is far away in Africa.

But shouldn't we be concerned?

Dr. med. Albrecht Ulmer

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## FROM AREQUIPA/PERÚ (2/2) ¿CÓMO ESTÁS, GRINGUITA?

**The open mindedness, the affability,  
the warm-heartedness and the  
zest for life of the Peruvians**

Each day I was greeted by the children of the school in La Mansión with this sentence: „¿Cómo estás, gringuita?“ (“How are you, stranger?“). In Latin America “gringo” means “stranger”. This is no offence. Usually it's said with a teasing but warm undertone.

Nevertheless I have felt as a stranger from the moment I arrived. I am taller than everybody there (anything from 5 inches to a foot and a half), my skin is pale, I have blonde hair and I knew little Spanish. Why do I talk funny? How long is the bus ride from Germany to Peru? How many siblings do I have? Where are my parents? Do I speak English? Can they borrow 50 Céntimos? What kinds of animals do I have? Do I have children? These are questions the children asked me. They never asked me what I was doing there and why on earth I came to their school.

I visited the school for the first time during the first week of October 2007. The roads got worse as we drove out of the city and towards La Mansión, the slum of Arequipa. We turned left to drive into La Mansión which is stretching from the foot of an arid hill all the way to the top. My hair was full of dust. Most houses only have a corrugated metal sheet as a roof, children play with deflated soccer balls or with toy cars they made themselves out of wires. In front of the houses there are many barking dogs. People there have rough faces, their clothes are simple and torn. The daily trip from the office of CIESCU in “Guardia civil” to La Mansión proved to be an adventure at first. There are so many busses that rush by. A “cobrador” (the cashier) is calling out loud the different stops of this bus, his Spanish is very fast. You have to literally jump onto the bus and in my opinion the busses could be 2 feet higher. Everybody is taken aboard even if there is no space left on the bus. Peruvians have no fear of contact.

We filled out questionnaires with the children of the school, asking about their eating habits, their state of health and their living situation. After that,

## experiences

in December 2007, we visited the families at home. We got to know several families and finally I realized that they differ greatly in their wealth, their knowledge about nutrition and their state of health. There was one house, consisting of one room: kitchen, living room and bed room all together. It smelled of urine and feces, some dirty clothes lay on the floor in a corner, there was no furniture. Seven persons lived in there and the father and husband had disappeared. The house right beside this one was a two-story building. Here both parents were employed, they had a refrigerator, gas for cooking and a TV set. There was one thing though all the families had in common: After some initial reservation and distrust we were welcomed warm-hearted and with great hospitality.

I got myself a wonderful souvenir, something I will always carry with me in my heart: the open mindedness, the affability, the warm-heartedness and the zest for life of the Peruvians. Not to speak of all the friends I found within CIESCU, our Peruvian associates.

A little girl, about five or six years old, gave a note to me on the day I said good-bye to all the children at the school. It read: “Ya ha nacido tu bebé.” I was bewildered, checking on my own belly. Or did she mean she'd like to be my child? I asked one of the teachers and she explained it to me: My baby is the school kitchen.

I was also told by the children not to forget them and to come back soon. Erika was one of the few children who never knew my name while I was in Arequipa. Or in her case she'd rather not say it because after all I was the gringuita. She gave me kiss and said: “Chau señorita Estephanie!”

Stephanie Wildenberg



## news

### NEWS OF "CLAM PER LA DIGNITAT" – SPAIN

- Nineteen people attended to the Hunger Supper celebrated on Friday, 23 May at 9pm in the parish of Sant Joan Baptista located in the neighborhood of Gracia, in Barcelona. The collection, which totaled 275 Euro, has been sent to South Africa for the project "HIV/AIDS Response Program" of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in South Africa. Many thanks to those who participated and to those who were unable to assist and still have sent a donation for the project. Specially, thanks to Lluís Vidal, of the parish, for his collaboration.

- Two applications for aid that were filed in May before the Generalitat de Catalunya have been rejected: 1) sensitizing project "BUTWEB-2008-CxD", subsidy application: 6.800 Euro; 2) international cooperation project "LA MANSION-2008: EDUCATION VERSUS MALNUTRITION", subsidy application: 15.000 Euro.

- A meeting with the members and Board of Management of Clam was held in San Just on Friday, August 22. It focused on the actual situation of the project La Mansión in Arequipa (Peru), and it was followed by a dinner for those who attended.

- On the coming month of October and since José Álvaro, president of CIESCU-Perú is in Barcelona, we have planned to meet him and Pilar Solà, president of CIESCU-Spain. Also and counting on the stay of Pilar in Peru during the month of June, we will try to celebrate an open act in order to show the project La Mansión.

- The V General Assembly of Clam per la Dignitat is scheduled for next December 27. It will be held in the parochial centre of Sant Vicenç de Sarrià. All members and friends of Clam, please, save the day.

- Anyone interested on volunteering for Sostre in Barcelona, please contact Javi Laguno (xavierlaguno@gmail.com) or the Secretary's Office.

### NEWS OF "CLAIM FOR DIGNITY e.V." - GERMANY

- Following the positive experience of last winter in Kyrgyzstan and after the building of the first "yellow house", which was constructed under the coordination of Andreas Simon (please, see "Experiences" on Bulletin no. 15, July-September 2007) we are pleased to announce that a second house with similar characteristics is now being built.

- Last July 18, it was celebrated the second work meeting between the teachers of the secondary school Media Robert-Bosch of Langenau (close to the city of Ulm, Germany) who are involved in the project La Mansión and the Board of Management of Claim for Dignity e.V. An agreement was reached regarding a mutual collaboration with duration of two years in order to support the project La Mansión and regarding cooperation with the school of La Mansión. In this respect, a special journey has been scheduled for November 7 in the Robert-Bosch Institute due to José Álvaro's presence, president of CIESCU-Perú and director of the project La Mansión.

- On Monday, July 28, there was a meeting in Tübingen with the TheoPrax Foundation, directed by Professor Peter Eyerer, which ended with an agreement regarding mutual collaboration for the project La Mansión.

- Next Saturday, September 13, José Álvaro (CIESCU-Perú), Pilar Solà (CIESCU-Spain), Prof. Peter Eyerer (TheoPrax Foundation) and members of Claim for Dignity e.V. will meet in Tübingen. Besides getting to know each other personally, this encounter aims to deeply present the project La Mansión as well as to specify the joint work for the next months.

- Claim for Dignity e.V. intends to file an application for the international cooperation volunteering "Weltwärts" program sponsored by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in order to offer a 6-month stay in Arequipa, Perú, to young people interested in supporting the project La Mansión. For further information please contact us.

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