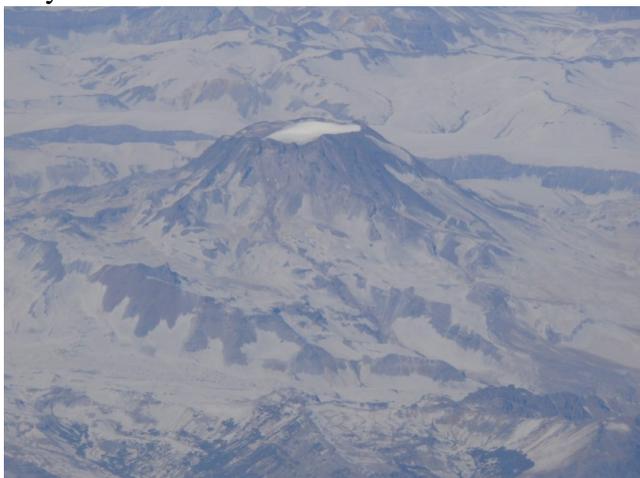


ADVENTURE CHILE (part 2)

Osanna Vaughn

Midday Tuesday, April 14th, Sarah, Nabillah, Emmanuel and I made our way to the airport, where we met up with Pedro and David Muñoz (Kejiwaan Councillor) and caught a plane down to Temuco. I ended up in the third row with a window seat and was able to enjoy the amazing view of the mountains as we headed south. We passed various volcanoes, including the Llama that erupted recently. Apparently it choked itself on ash and lava, and is now quiet again – though very black!



One of many the volcanoes in Chile

In Temuco we jumped into taxis and made our way to the country property of the Villagra family, where we were received with much warmth and served a tasty tea with pastries and other snacks. This reminds me of a little anecdote about the six o'clock evening snack known here as 'las onces'. The elevensies would be the misleading translation as it has nothing to do with the time, but rather refers to the number of letters (eleven) in the word 'aguardiente' – a potent schnapps-like drink. Apparently the monks used to put some in their evening tea but, rather than admit to drinking aguardiente, they referred to it as elevensies. In Chile this has now become an evening tradition, though not necessarily with the alcohol!

Back to Temuco. After the first light meal we had a lovely latihan in two halls on the property, part of a project offering spaces to host family, Subud and charity events, as well as wedding parties and similar. Loreto Villagra told me about the

Christmas parties they organise there for seriously and terminally ill children and their mothers. Loreto explained how she had come into contact with them when her own son had had to spend a month in hospital. Usually from very humble circumstances, often bringing up children alone, Loreto wanted to find a way to give the mothers and their children a little joy. With support from Subud members all over the country, they collect toys and money to organise a lovely Christmas party each year. To see a slide show of one year's event please go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vffDUqUXNWA> On Mother's Day the organise events for the mothers alone.

After latihan another feast was prepared, with steaks grilled on the enormous open fire at one end of the hall. There was much laughter, exchanges of stories and news and photographs, till we were taken up to the main house – an old, Swedish-style farmhouse – where we spent the night. In the morning we woke to the delicious smell of deep-fried bread rolls, and another gorgeous morning. The women did another latihan, then we headed back down into town where we met the mother of the Villagra family, who happened to be 77 that day. She told us with pride of the fact that she had eloped when she was 13 and stayed married for 61 years to her husband (of 22 at the time!) after giving birth to 9 children. With tears welling up in her eyes, she told me how much she misses him since he died a year ago.



Members in Temuco

After loving farewells, our fellowship boarded a bus for Villarica, a small community sitting on a lake at the foot of a volcano – both named Villarica as well. Here we were to join a few isolated members for latihan; but first we had

time to visit the village of Pucón which sits right under the slumbering volcano, and where Emmanuel proved his hardiness by taking a swim.



Emmanuel Aronie braves Lake Villarica

The members who joined us for latihan were all quite young in both years on this planet and in Subud. It was a pleasure to get to know them a little and hear of their lives and dreams. A small cabin had been rented for the day, so we took turns, ladies first and then the men, followed by more tea and snacks. At 21:00 we all walked up to the bus station where we caught a very elegant night bus back to Santiago where we arrived at 7:00 the following morning.

After spending a quiet day relaxing, we headed in the late afternoon to the La Florida group. After many years changing venues for latihan, this group has finally acquired a property with the help of many members in Chile as well as the Muhammad Subuh Foundation. The plan is to renovate the house very quickly so that it will have two decent-sized halls as well as meetings areas and a large patio at the back. While in the area, we visited a municipal school where the director and various teachers are Subud members. Lucia (the director and also the chair of the La Florida group) showed us around and explained how a concert that had been organised at the school to fundraise for the new Subud house. We also heard of the positive feed-back that they receive for the atmosphere at the school in general.

Returning to the house (photo on the right), we joined the members for latihan (including a good number of young ones), after which another

scrumptious tea was served with toasted sandwiches and home-made cakes. On this occasion I had a chance to speak with Berta, the youth coordinator who had just returned from the Panamerican Youth Gathering at Amanecer in Colombia. She was very enthusiastic about the work done there, feeling that there was a strong commitment from all present to be actively involved in and work for Subud. There is much excitement about going to the world congress in New Zealand, with plans to help in fundraising efforts. In fact, I've been delighted by the general enthusiasm members in Chile (both young and old) have expressed towards getting to Christchurch if at all possible.



My last day in Santiago was spent with Sarah at her home, sharing thoughts and impressions of the visit, and also catching up with emails and other work on the computer. In the evening I was taken to the Subud house for a last latihan with the helpers who were beginning a helpers weekend. It was a lovely way to finish off the visit and share some last words before Pedro kindly took me to the airport and sent me on my way to Mexico.

I thank the Almighty for giving me the chance to make this wonderful trip to Chile and the members for making me feel so welcome and at home. Though I had already met a number of them over the years at congresses and gatherings, it is quite another thing to share the latihan in each of their groups, make new friends, learn a little about their lives, and hear of their endeavours and aspirations. Blessings to everyone one of them!

Love, Osanna