

March 20, 2010

To the world family:

“Toward the One. The Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty.”

I first began spiritual outreach in South America in 1999 through the Dances of Universal Peace in Peru and continue to this day at least twice per year, additionally teaching in other SA countries.

Alonso del Rio, is one of the men who, at my first Dance of Universal Peace in Lima, sat in the center as my musician with his sitar, not knowing what the Dances were and what to expect. He became my mentee in 1999, and through the years, we offered Dances in Lima, and its surrounding sacred locations.

He comes from Pucalpa, a remote “jungle” village on the Amazon River. He studied with his local shaman teacher for 25 years, before he, himself, received the shaman’s cape.

He is a professional on all levels. He received 2 international first place film awards for 2 films he wrote, directed and produced. He has recorded numerous cd’s, performed on stage with various famous musicians, and you hear him on my 2 cd’s, Kunda and One Love.

He married a German woman and now has 5 children. Together they created a school that is FREE to some 40 local Quechua children through age 14 and is supported by donations. The school teaches traditional reading, writing, math, but also farming, building, singing, film, music, storytelling, while maintaining their traditional Andean culture, teaching in their native language of Quechua, and also teaching them the Spanish language.

I visited the school, located in Taray, outside of Cusco, where we led Dances of Universal Peace. In turn, the children taught me various traditional Andean songs and circle dances.

On February 28, 2010, a high Andean lake above the school overflowed, came raging through the property, destroying all of what Alonso, his family, and the local community had established for the children, also leaving 7 people dead and dozens missing. Homes, buildings, farm, food, everything is lost.

Alonso’s first sentence to my initial inquiry to the devastation was, “Grace, you are always there.” As a teacher and friend, this affected me deeply, and one that will hit home for many of you, being “a friend” to our mentees, mureeds, or students.

In my personal growth as a dance leader and teacher, it is not about the words “religion” or “spirituality”. It is not about God, Jesus, Mary, or Buddha. It is not about Sufism,

Judaism, Christianity or Buddhism. It is not about the Dances of Universal Peace. Although the world religious and spiritual modalities offer their wisdom for inner and outer growth that are helpful, it is the personal practice of living on the planet as a human, in relationship within themselves and all other beings, seen and unseen, that is the most important consideration of a way of life, regardless of what wisdom tradition one follows.

At this time, financial contributions are number one to begin reconstruction. If you feel moved to financially contribute to the school's rebuilding, there are 2 ways:

1. Bank codes Alonso established are listed below in Alonso's email for Peru banks and international contributions.
2. Grace Marie is collecting donations and is having a funding drive. Checks or money orders in US dollars can be sent to:
Grace Marie, 230 Park St., Fort Collins, CO 80521

In love and friendship,

Grace Marie
Fort Collins, Colorado

Email from Alonso:

7 dead people and total destruction of Wiñaypaq Intercultural School in Taray, 5 minutes away from Písaq, Cusco.

On the night of Sunday February 28th, the people of Taray were ravaged by the overflowing of Lake Qoricocha, with the regrettable balance of 7 dead people and dozens missing.

Another victim of this disaster has been Wiñaypaq Intercultural School, literally vanished from the earth by the fury of the waters. This school had been providing free school education to rural children from neighbouring communities for 5 years and was preparing to start the school year on March 1st. This will not happen until we can build temporarily new classrooms.

Wiñaypaq Education Association invokes your solidarity for the fast reconstruction of our school, as everything we had been able to achieve during the past five years of very hard work has been lost. All contributions however small will be welcome.

We provide you with the bank account numbers of the association at the Banco Continental :

For contributions from the same bank: 0011 0200 0200731635 35

For contributions from other Peruvian banks: 011 200 0002 00731635 35

For contributions from banks abroad :

Swift Code: BCON PEPL 0011 0200 0200731635 35

One final thought: this disaster, like many others, could have been avoided if Lake Qoricocha had been drained on time. We hope that this tragedy in Taray sets alerts to the

authorities to make forecasts with the hundreds of highland lakes that are about to collapse due to recent weeks' heavy rains.

For those new to the Wiñaypaq school experience please go to:

<http://www.asociacioneducativawinaypaq.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mw74BwyX5rs>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bIcEyxYb4HY>

Thank you!