

Greetings From Ecuador!

June, 2004



MTW Missionaries from all over Ecuador gathered in a small Andean town called Salcedo recently for our annual retreat. During one of the four days, we took a trip to visit a crater lake over a dormant volcano. It was an adventure worthy of the National Geographic Channel!

After traveling North by bus on the Pan American Highway for about thirty minutes, we turned West onto a climbing, twisting, narrow and frequently un-paved road toward _____ . In the next two hours of travel time, we passed through some of the remotest farms and settlements ever encountered. When we finally arrived at the crater, we discovered that a small indigenous community lived there. The women were making and selling woven and knitted hats, sweaters and gloves while the men rented burros and served as tour guides.

The temperature was in the mid - 40's; it was windy, and we were COLD!! But we warmed up a bit on our hike down to the lake. Since we were not accustomed to the high altitude (over 12,000 feet), we rented burros to take us back to the crater rim.

As far as we were from "civilization," and we were VERY FAR, we were *NOT* far from the Gospel witness. We met the son of the pastor of the Evangelical church and gave him a Bible in his native tongue, Quichua.

The fact that the Pastor's son had no Bible shows that there remains a great need for the type of help Missionaries provide. The Ecuador MTW Missionaries are working together to address the need for national pastors and lay-leaders to be trained and equipped for the work to which God has called them. We are building a Bible training center in Quito where indigenous pastors can study and learn in their native tongue, Quichua. We are also planning to launch a Bible Institute in Guayaquil, where courses will be taught in Spanish. And we would like to establish a "satellite" campus in the city of Duran that will serve Quichua pastors in costal Ecuador, offering Bible courses in Quichua and Spanish.

Please pray that
God will provide
the resources for
Bible Training
Centers in Quito
and Guayaquil

Jncan Outpost

Following our Country retreat, the Smith family spent two days in Quito, staying with some friends from our language school days in Costa Rica. We drove around a bit, like tourists do, toting the camera and taking pictures. We visited an interesting Inca fortress that was a bit "off the beaten path," and were rewarded with a personal, up close look at an archaeological dig. The fortress in this picture is huge -- about the size of three soccer fields -- and sits atop the only hill in a valley that stretches for miles. In this picture, you can see to the top of the fortress, but you can't see the back side that slopes downward as this side does. From inside this outpost, the warriors had a panoramic view of 360 degrees, with their greatest line of sight being more than twenty miles to the North. In the days of the Inca empire, the warriors who manned the fortress were able to control all the surrounding territory and keep their settlements free from enemy invaders. In fact, their line of sight was so great that if they saw an enemy band entering the valley from the North, the warriors would have five hours to prepare to meet the enemy.



In early April, the San Agustín church family enjoyed a three-day retreat at a Christian campground three hours North of Guayaquil. It was our first retreat in five years, and a welcome change from the fast-paced life of the big city. We had a nice-sized group of 47 people -- families as well as single adults.

San Agustín Retreat

The theme of the retreat was the interconnectedness of the Body of Christ, as illustrated in the New Testament use of the word, "one another." We formed into seven "working groups" with each group studying one particular aspect of connectedness, such as "serve one another," "exhort one another," "pray for one another." After they had studied the scriptures that related to their topic, each table group had to write and produce a drama or a song whereby they could demonstrate to the others in skits on Saturday night what they had learned.



The main diversion during our free time was the river that ran beside the campground. The water was swift, cool and clean, and we had a great time jumping, wading and swimming in the river.

Sunday was Easter. We met together outside at dawn for a devotion, prayer and singing. After breakfast, we had our regular worship service. Following a big meal at lunchtime, we all boarded the bus and headed home to Guayaquil physically and spiritually refreshed.



Youth Group Extravaganza

by Allison & Benjamin Smith

Allison: Who would have thought that twenty kids would come to a youth group outing that was planned for the youth of two churches -- San Agustín and San Andrés!? But they did!

We met at San Andrés on a Saturday morning and set out for our destination: Club Rocafuerte, about 20 minutes from town. We had to ride in a very small van, and when we arrived, we were thankful to be there.

After getting to know each other a bit better, we played Capture The Flag with water balloons. When that didn't work out so well, we began a triathlon in which we had to do a wheel barrow race, a 3-legged race, and a running race. My team lost because the girls didn't know how to do a wheel barrow race.

Benjamin: Leading the activities was Xavier, the San Agustín youth leader. He was also the doctor if anyone got hurt.

After playing for what seemed like hours, it was time to eat. Dad grilled hamburgers on the bar-be-que, and we had burgers, chips, cookies and soda.

Allison: Finally, the adult leaders let us go swimming. Yeah!!! My friends and I were just about to jump in the pool when we decided to put on some sun tan lotion. We headed over to where my dad was to get the swim bag he had packed. But when he reached into the bag, he didn't pull out sun tan lotion; he pulled out bug repellent! I guess I'll have to pack the bag myself next time.

Benjamin: After lunch, many of the teens enjoyed the large pool and its waterfall. The hot Ecuador sun bathed those outside the pool, while in the water, kids played games of all kinds imaginable with a ball.

The event was organized by San Agustín's youth leader and the pastors of San Agustín and San Andrés.

Big Prayer Item

The MTW Missionaries in Ecuador are in the beginning steps of a major reorganization that we believe will help us achieve our vision of bringing a Reformed and covenantal church planting movement to the country. We have appointed a leadership team with representatives for the various ministries, and committees for each ministry area.

I am very excited, as are all the missionaries, about shaping and focusing our ministries so as to "see" what we want the future to look like, and then working together to bring it about.

The next few months will be crucial ones in the reorganization process. We are dedicating four days in August for a vision retreat that should bring many of the "big picture" ideas into sharper focus. Meanwhile, the Guayaquil team is working with our church plants to position them for both addition and multiplication.

On page one I asked you to pray for a Bible Institute in Guayaquil and a Training Center in Quito. These will be important components in the reorganization. But for them to become a reality, we must rely on the Lord to provide project funding from our churches in the States.