

## November 2020 Newsletter from Ecuador

### We pray for our countries and the world

In these times of pandemic and social and economic crisis, and in the midst of racial, social and political crisis, we pray that the love of our creator can be reborn in humanity. We pray for our hearts to be open to the wisdom of the word of God. We remember Paul's words to the Ephesians in chapter 4:2

**"Be humble and meek, and tolerant and patient with one another, in love."**

The Pandemic has shown us that humanity is fragile, and that we need each other. Quarantine has shown us that loneliness and isolation hurt us, and we long to see family and friends again. May the holy spirit work in our hearts and the hearts of our rulers and people for better days.

### COVID in Ecuador

Ecuador continues to experience the impact of COVID 19. Ecuador has instituted a stoplight system of restrictions; red, yellow, and green depending on national parameters. Most of the country is now on a yellow status. The yellow status allows restaurants to open at 50% of seating capacity, permission to circulate in private vehicles 4 days a week according to license plate numbers, opening of all businesses who use bio-secure procedures, social distancing and mandatory use of masks in public. So, life is slowly starting to function more fully.

Hospitals are functioning below full capacity and the situation is better, this is an improvement over the early days of the virus when hospitals and cemeteries in Guayaquil were completely overwhelmed in April and June. As in all the world, Ecuador continues to live in sorrow for the those who have died and those with no financial resources due to the virus. We thank God that the situation is much better, and the case numbers are down although we are starting to see a slight increase in cases in the Guayaquil area.

During this crisis, the pastors and leaders of the Methodist Church have been working via virtual media to provide spiritual guidance, Sunday school activities and VBS, health advice and orientation in prevention of diseases, and helping to distribute food supplies and hygiene kits to provide for the physical needs of their communities.



Family Receiving Food - Quevedo

As of early October, churches are now authorized to open for services as long as the required protocol is complied with. Now, almost 15 of the 24 Methodist congregations are open for limited Sunday worship. Most of the churches in urban areas like Quito, continue their activities in virtual mode, at least until December.

In Pijal and El Prado and our other children's ministries, full weekly meetings with the children remain suspended. Since October they started to receive small groups of 10 children, accompanying them with their schoolwork and providing spiritual and emotional support. In September, the children started school activities in a virtual mode throughout the country and needs are being felt more. Most children do not have an internet connection at home and must use cell phones to receive instruction, to do this they have to buy prepaid cards for data service. During this time of economic crisis, the cost of materials weighs on families and your support is crucial, thank you for this.



Service for Graduating Youth in Pijal

### **2021 VIM teams to Ecuador**

We hope that by 2021 improvements will be made in the fight against COVID, and that travel will be allowed worldwide. It will all depend on the global situation and travel regulations. Today, international travelers can enter Ecuador with the presentation of a negative COVID PCR test, if the test is positive, a 14-day isolation is required. With confidence in the improvement of the world situation, we suggest that you include your trip in your plans for 2021.

### **Our work from home**

During the quarantine we started to work from home virtually, supporting the work of the local churches. It has been a very rich time to create networks of support among pastors and leaders, using creative ways of producing worship, devotionals, and providing spiritual and emotional accompaniment activities in these times of anguish and uncertainty. An important task has been weekly meetings between the pastors and the spiritual and psycho-emotional accompaniment team.

The Church has also developed basic training courses for local leaders in Crisis and Consolation, accompaniment for couples, health, and prevention of domestic violence.

During these months we have been able to support many of our pastors' families and members of congregations in situations of crises related to disease, deaths, providing support. Once we had permission to do so, we could physically visit some of the pastors and churches to coordinate solidarity campaigns and distribute COVID test kits as well as accompany them in special limited events.



Sara Family Visit



Dakin Testing for Covid

### **Our stay in Ecuador**

Just this week, Global Ministries confirmed the extension of Sara's current missionary assignment by 3 months, December through February 2021. This is in consideration that a new missionary placement will be approved for the Methodist Church of Ecuador, for which they will be considering Sara's application. We have prayed and felt the call to stay in Ecuador for a few more years. There is a good possibility that this will come to pass as we wait and pray for God's will. We think that our stay will be approved for 3 more years, if not, we will be helping out as volunteers through the summer of 2021. In this way we will be able to support the VIM groups and the completion of projects as well as the strengthening of Church programs.

We want to thank you for the significant support you have provided for us, especially missionary salary support this makes our work possible. We will still need your support through the end this year and ask that you consider maintaining it.

Attached are the urgent needs to support the mission of the Methodist Church in Ecuador through the Advance, if you need more information to develop an alternative Christmas gift campaign or individual donations, please write to us. A special and urgent need that you may consider is the support for pastor's salaries, this is much more important during this pandemic.

During this time of crisis, we pray for you. May God strengthen us in his love for all humanity.

Sara and Dakin

Quito-Ecuador, Nov 9, 2020