



August 2022  
Newsletter: 5

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Having lived in Northern Europe, living on the equator is a funny experience. When I arrived at Dublin Airport in the early hours of a wintery February morning, the temperature was hovering around 0°C, and it was still dark. Now, if you're in the Northern Hemisphere, you've seen the days lengthen in Spring, and with Summer past, the days are once again becoming shorter. When I arrived in Ecuador, the sun rose just after 6am, and set just after 6pm, and it has continued to do that every day since. Here, there are only two seasons, marked by the amount of rain that falls, so it's hard for Ecuadorians to imagine a country with 4 distinct seasons, and days that change length according to the time of year. On the other hand, it's reliable, predictable and practical.



The predictable, but beautiful Ecuador sunset

**July and August** Another funny feeling has been July and August – having always worked around the school calendar, and being used to July/August as being a time when people go on holidays, I've practically forgotten it is summer at home, as work as continued here. There have been lots of 'one-off' events happening, and lots of comings and goings. I did have a few days off in July, which I spent exploring Quito, the capital of Ecuador. I've been to Quito a few times, but it was nice to have time to be a 'tourist'.

### 'Young People with Value'

Thank you to everyone who prayed for the regional youth event in July. Although it seems like a long time ago now, it was a very special day, as it was the first event of its kind in several years. Around 100 young people from the region attended. It was wonderful to form part of the organizing committee (pictured right), alongside the youth reps and the National Youth President, who asked me to be one of the speakers.



I was so nervous, as I had never spoken in Spanish to that many people before. The theme was 1 Timothy 4v12, and alongside the talks, there were times of worship, prayer and games, and of course, plenty of food. The whole day went very well (including my talk!). It was wonderful for the young people to be able to gather like this for the first time in so long. Furthermore, for one of the church groups, being a church plant, it was the young people's first time ever being at an event like it, worshipping with other young people their age and meeting other Christians outside their own church.

**New English Classes** August saw the launch of two new English classes, for the first time in churches outside of Santo Domingo. One church is in a small village, and the young people are enthusiastic in attending, but numbers are small on a Sunday. The other church is much larger, and is involved in a large child sponsorship programme. Currently, I travel to this churches on a Wednesday and Thursday afternoon.





### Update: 'Ciudad de Dios' Church Plant – Snack Funding

Since the middle of June, we have been receiving funding to provide a nutritional snack in the church plant I work in on a Saturday afternoon. (This was where we completed the Samaritan's Purse programme). Each Saturday, after our service, we provide a snack, which varies each week to emphasise the importance of a varied and balanced diet. Alongside the ongoing spiritual work, it is hoped to provide some practical support, including education on health, nutrition and hygiene, which is sorely needed in this community.



### Other Goings On

There was lots going on in July in the church, including a service of baptism, and I visited some of the social projects taking place in other churches in the coastal region of Ecuador which support the locals' practical needs (we even fitted in a day at the beach, but it rained nearly the whole day). A supporting church from USA sent a team to do some building work and children's events. Two of the team members were called Melissa – I've never been in group with three Melissas before, so we had to get a picture (on the right) I've also recently been working a bit with the music group in church, and helping them to learn songs in English.



### London calling

The last week in August saw another very special visitor – the Latin American Co-Ordinator for the Methodist Church in Britain, Sandra Lopez, visited Ecuador. As part of her role, Sandra supports me in my work, and maintains relations with the Ecuadorian church. She visited the areas and projects I am working in, watched English classes, met the young people, and attended church on Sunday morning. It was a very packed few days, but it was a blessing to be able to share with her many things which up until now, I have only been able to share via email. She took lots of photos and videos, which will be shared over the coming months.



### And finally...

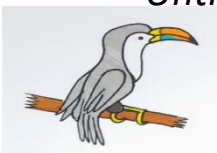
Sandra and I had a few hours in Quito before she had to leave for the airport, so naturally, we decided to take the 'TeleferiQo' cable car which took us up the side of Pichincha volcano to overlook Quito and to a height of 4050m above sea level. Breath-taking views – literally – at 4050m, we didn't go very far, or very fast. Nevertheless, it was a very fun experience, and we finished it with a hot chocolate made from Ecuadorian cacao back in the city (at a mere 2800m above sea level).

### Prayer points

- Pray for everyone attending the English Classes and all the young people
- Pray for safety for me as I travel about and carry on my work
- Pray for the church and its leaders in seeking direction and guidance and planning for the months ahead
- Give thanks for strengthening relationships with members of the church, pray this will continue

Wishing you God's richest blessings,

Until next time! Melissa





*A few extra photos I couldn't get fitted in*



*Preparing plantain for over 100 young people's breakfast at the youth event*



*A beautiful sunset shining through church plant 'Ciudad de Dios'*



*Sandra speaking at church at Sunday morning*



*Sometimes you just have to join in skipping rope!*



*Enjoying a special hot chocolate (from local cacao)*



*Enjoying the view over the mountains and valleys (Quito is the dots in the valley beneath)*

