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Newsletter: 4

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***‘This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength’***

*As the months have marched on, and I count up how long I have been in Ecuador, I also remember how long it is since I have seen family and friends. Some days, this is hard, and on one day, this verse from Nehemiah 8v10, popped up on my Instagram. An encouragement and reminder that not only is God our strength, but also that we should use every day for Him. Read on for a summary of what I’ve been up to, and also what is going on in Ecuador at the moment.*

**Samaritan’s Purse Programme Completion and Graduation**

If you have read my previous newsletter, you’ll know that we launched ‘La Gran Aventura’ (The Great Adventure) Children’s (and Young People’s) Bible Club in March. We finally made it to the end of the ‘Adventure’ last week, and enjoyed the ‘graduation’ in which every child and young person received a certificate and a New Testament. We had a small celebration and, despite being limited in how much we could buy due to recent price rises, thanks to a donation, we were able to celebrate together!



The 13-week programme, which somehow ended up lasting 4 months, was a wonderful opportunity to relaunch of the work in this community after two years of disruption, and a chance for me to do some talks in Spanish. In the final weeks, we also had more parents coming along, and we hope they will continue to come. Numbers vary, but a few weeks ago we had 70 sandwiches (for everyone) and 50 bags of children’s vitamins, and we ran out of both!

It’s wonderful to see this many people, but it does mean more pressure on limited space and supplies – pray for wisdom over the coming weeks as we make plans for the next few months.

We have recently received funding to provide a small, nutritious snack to everyone after the service. This is a nice treat to have for everyone, and we also hope to be able to use it to talk about nutrition and a balanced diet, as this is an area which needs a lot of education and development.



**Zooming all over the world**

Zoom has allowed some pretty cool opportunities recently – I’ve zoomed a youth group in Fermanagh, my fellow Mission Partners who I trained with in Cliff College, in a call covering 3 continents and time zones, and did an interview with the Global Youth Representatives of the Methodist Church in Britain.

## Pray for Ecuador

While this has not affected me too much, Ecuador is currently seeing much unrest due to protests and strikes being held by Indigenous Federations. Many of the main roads and roads connecting cities have been blocked for over two weeks now, and deliveries are struggling to get through. The groups are demanding a control on rising food and fuel prices, fair wages for producers of food, cessation on debt interest for one year and release of public money for schools and hospitals. There is much to pray for, not just that the protests and roadblocks will stop, but also that there will be fairer prices for both grower and buyer and fairer use of public money. The Methodist Church in Ecuador has been gathering to pray for the country, and helping practically as well.



A sunny day in Santo Domingo

### Upcoming events

- I am currently part of planning group for a regional youth gathering on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July. We hope that 100 young people will gather in Santo Domingo from churches all over the coastal region. The theme is 1 Timothy 4 v12 'Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity'. I'm doing one of the talks, and I'm quite nervous, as I've never spoken to that many people before in Spanish! There is lots of planning, including for catering, music, transport and activities.
- The church hopes to welcome some visitors in July, and I hope to be able to have a visit from the UK in August. Pray that these trips will be able to go ahead, especially in the current uncertainty in the country

### Prayer points

- For the regional youth event on 9<sup>th</sup> July. Pray for me, as I deliver one of the talks
- Pray for everyone attending the English Classes and all the young people in church
- Pray for Ecuador, as detailed above
- Pray for the pastors of the Methodist churches and its leader, Bishop Alfredo
- Pray for me – that the joy of the Lord will be my strength, as I seek to serve him and to deepen relationships in the church



Latitude 00°00'00

### And finally...

We had some American visitors recently, and on their last day we had a fun visit to the 'Mitad del Mundo' or 'Middle of the World' (i.e. the equator). Much dispute continues over where the equator actually is, and there's lots of touristy gimmicks, but it was a fun day, with some exhibitions on Ecuador and traditional shops and restaurants. And here's the photo (left) to prove I was there!



Coffee In the Northern Hemisphere (note the large 'N')

Thank you for your prayers and interest, and for signing up to receiving this Newsletter. You can also keep in touch by following me on Instagram – melissa.in.ecuador, my prayer cards, and on the Methodist Church's World Mission pages and social media.

*Wishing you God's richest blessings,*

*Until next time! Melissa*

