



**April 2022
Newsletter: 3**

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American team visit

March got off to a slightly different start than initially expected. Just three days before they arrived, I was asked to accompany and translate for a team from South Carolina who were due to hold medical and eye clinics organized by some of the churches in the coastal region of Ecuador. The team was mostly comprised of students, accompanied by a doctor, an optician, and the pastor who was the team leader. They arrived with more suitcases of medicine than I have ever seen and over 2000 pairs of prescription glasses, as well as the equipment to work out people's prescriptions and find them glasses which matched that prescription! The local churches had been responsible for advertising the clinics, and many people waited for hours to be seen, making it a tiring and hot week. Nevertheless, it was a great week for both the team and the churches. It was also very interesting to be on the host country's side and I look forward to more teams in the future.



More than 2000 glasses waiting to be given out

Samaritan's Purse programme

The following week was the launch of 'La Gran Aventura' (*The Great Adventure*) Children's Bible Club in an outlying neighbourhood the church works in. The material is prepared by the organization *Samaritan's Purse*, and was accompanied by the giving out of shoeboxes packed with toiletries, stationary and toys for each child. I am helping with this 12-week evangelistic programme, introducing the children to the basics of Christianity, using themes such as 'The Great Creator' and 'The Great Problem'. It will continue until the end of May, so please pray for around the fifty or so children who are attending, and, in particular, that they will continue to come for all twelve weeks.

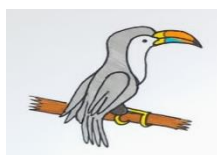


English classes

I am also pleased that the English classes I have been planning have finally gotten underway. The classes are a mixture of in-person and on Zoom, and around 50 children, young people and adults have attended so far. These classes have been a good way for me to get to know some of the children and young people in the church, as well as helping those attending improve their English.

Visit to Quito

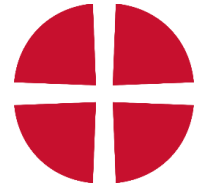
During April, I also had my first proper visit to the capital of Ecuador, Quito, (asides from when I landed in the airport in February). I had some time to see the city, and meet colleagues from the Methodist Church in Ecuador. While I was there, I also met Bishop Alfredo, who is the leader of the Methodist Church, and was able to present him with a card of greetings from the Methodist Church in Ireland and a small gift (shown in the photo on the right).



Easter and illness

Easter also did not turn out as I had anticipated. The church in Santo Domingo held the traditional Ecuadorian Good Friday service of 'Las Siete Palabras' which features seven talks or reflections on each of the things Jesus said from the cross. (It is kind of like the traditional Nine Lessons and Carols, except that it is at Easter).

I had volunteered to give one of the reflections, and it was my first time speaking in the church. It went well, and the whole service was a blessing to all the participants and the congregation. Unfortunately, during the service, I started to feel unwell, and by the time I got home, I had a high temperature and fever. As a result, I missed the Easter Sunday services, and ended up having to take another week off, as I was diagnosed with dengue fever. Thankfully, I am now feeling much better and continue to pray for renewed energy and strength. Even in the midst of lying in bed on Easter Sunday, I was reminded that Jesus has truly conquered death, and nothing, not even illness, can take away the triumph of Easter Sunday – He is risen indeed!



Speaking at the Good Friday service, about 2 hours before I took sick



Pastors and mission partners on retreat

And finally...

At the end of April, I was able to attend a retreat with the pastors of the *United Evangelical Methodist Church of Ecuador*, and other missionaries who work with the church. It was exciting to meet the pastors, who all come from very different backgrounds, and work in different types of churches. It was also a time to talk about the future and direction of the church. This is something for the church to pray about, and also for me, to see if there is anywhere I can support the church.

Prayer points

- Pray for everyone attending the English Classes and Children's Bible Club
- Pray for the pastors of the Methodist churches and its leader, Bishop Alfredo
- Pray for me as I continue to recover from dengue, continue to get accustomed to life here, and deepen relationships in the church
- Looking ahead: I will be continuing with the English Classes and the Children's Club, and continuing to explore more opportunities to minister to the youth. Pray for guidance as I continue to explore how I can be most effective in my work in Ecuador.



Holy Week meal made of grains, pulses and salted cod – 'la fanesca'



Thank you for your prayers and interest, and also for signing up to receiving this Newsletter. You can also keep in touch by following me on Instagram – [melissa.in.ecuador](#), using my prayer cards, and on the Methodist Church's World Mission pages and social media. If anyone else would like to sign up, they can email me or get in touch.

Wishing you God's richest blessings,

Until next time! Melissa

