



**February 2022
Newsletter: 2**

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Christmas & Commissioning

I sent out my first newsletter just before Christmas – it was wonderful to be able to spend Christmas and New Year at home, after having been studying in Cliff College and before heading off again. After Christmas was a very busy time at home. On Sunday 16th January, I was commissioned as a Mission Partner of the Methodist Church. The service was a true blessing, with many words of encouragement brought from Ireland, Great Britain and Ecuador. The message of ‘be my witness’ from Acts 1, with emphasis on ‘being’ before ‘doing’ was thought-provoking. (The service is still available to watch on Facebook: search ‘Dungannon Methodist Circuit’ and scroll back to 16th January).



Getting my Visa

Only a couple of days after the commissioning service, I had my visa appointment and was delighted to be able to get the visa I had applied for. I praise God for being able to get all the paperwork completed. While having coffee that morning I read the verse ‘He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field’ (Luke 10v2). What an encouragement, arriving at the just right moment – how good is God!

Travel at last!

After what had felt like a long time waiting, suddenly, everything accelerated, and my flights were booked. Flying with Covid restrictions was certainly a challenge, mostly due to having to pass through Spain, and so having to fulfil both Spanish and Ecuadorian requirements for entry. Saying goodbye to family and friends was also tough, by the time I got on the airplane, I was so tired, I slept without any problem! Thankfully, the journey went very smoothly and I arrived in Quito airport, where I was met by the Bishop of the Methodist Church, Bishop Alfredo, and the Superintendent of the Coastal Region.

Ecuador is divided into four regions – the Amazon, the Andes mountains, the Galapagos Islands, and the Coastal region, although I am two hours away from the coast, it still comes under the coastal region. The next day I arrived in Santo Domingo de las Tsáchilas (after descending over 2000m through the Andes) and to the superintendent’s house, where I am currently staying. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for my suitcases, which had stayed in Madrid, but happily we were reunited after five days.



At the ‘Santo Domingo’ sign overlooking the city

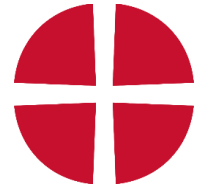
First impressions

Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas is surrounded on one side by the Andes mountains, on the road to the coast, tropical trees and birds, incorporated into a city which is made up of busy streets, loud noises, lots of traffic and people and buildings in every direction.

It doesn't feel like I've been here long enough yet to write about it. It's the rainy season, which sometimes makes travelling about more difficult, and we've had to postpone a few visits and services (much like at home, with storms and snow!). However, I've been to the main church in Santo Domingo,



as well as some other churches in the area, and am getting to know the members, and especially the young people and those who work with the children and young people. Having only been here a few weeks, I'm remembering how long it takes to get to know a place, the people and the culture – patience and energy are needed! I've also been speaking exclusively in Spanish, as no one here speaks English. Thankfully, my Spanish is, for the most part, holding up, and I'm getting used to the differences in Ecuadorian Spanish.



Prayer points

- Give thanks for safe arrival and for finding a place to live
- Give thanks for Pastor Nolberto and his wife Amarilis, who have been so welcoming, and pray for them in their work, which is not only very busy but also covers a wide geographical area
- Pray for me as I continue to settle in and get to know members of the church and its work
- Pray for guidance as I start to work in the church about how God wants me to carry out my work here



Keeping in contact

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](https://www.instagram.com/melissa.in.ecuador), using my prayer cards, and on the Methodist Church's World Mission pages and social media.

If you know anyone who would like to receive this Newsletter, please tell them to email me (there is also a link which I can send).

Thank you again for your support and prayers!

Wishing you God's richest blessings,

Melissa

