

August 19, 2009

***ECUADORIAN MISSION 2009 (PRELIMINARY REPORT)***

On behalf of our eleven Ecuador Mission trip participants, I would like to thank the Seabury Deanery and its eight member parishes for their continuing support of our work with the Episcopal Diocese of Ecuador Central and the people of Ecuador.

***The primary goal of the Seabury Deanery*** and Episcopal Deanery's in general as stated in the Episcopal Diocesan of Connecticut Mission Statement, is to "evangelize the word of Jesus Christ." The Seabury Deanery's continuing Ecuadorian Mission work accomplishes this goal in the most direct and purposeful way of all Deanery endeavors.

***Direct Evangelization.*** As ambassadors of Jesus Christ serving under the auspices of the Seabury Deanery and our Diocese of Connecticut, we are His apostles to the Ecuadorian people and communities we visit and work within. For two weeks each year our Seabury Deanery mission group journeys to the Amazonian village of Puyo to join with our partner parish, La Ascension, their priest, Padre Andres and the members and families of the parish in Christian Communion. It is this direct physical contact between peoples of two distant Episcopal Diocese that is by far our greatest gift to the people there. Our presence brings assurance, hope and nurturing faith to a people struggle to follow the word of Jesus Christ.

***We are all one family in Christ.*** He has sent us out into the world to do the work He has given us to do - to love Him with all our hearts and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Over the past three years we have developed close lasting relationships with parish families. Their church lovingly displays our photos, parish families pass the baby Jesus presented to us by Bishop Smith from family to family, and pray for the work of the Seabury Deanery each Sunday. This year my wife, Wendy, and I were asked by the wife of the parish priest to become the God Parents of their baby daughter, Maria, at the Baptismal Ceremony to be held upon our return next year. You can imagine the overwhelming honor this is for my wife and me. This is just one example of the trust and respect held between our two Christian communities.

***The physical work we do in community is in many ways the by-product*** – the vehicle not the goal - of the Christian work of bringing proof of the love of Jesus Christ through our willing presence. Gandhi responded when asked what message he had for the world: "my life is my message." The projects we undertake are at the direction of the Bishop of the Diocese of Ecuador Central. Both Bishops Smith and Curry have recently visited Ecuador touring with the Bishop and his mission leaders and our hosts, The Mocks, to demonstrate our Dioceses continuing support for their growing Episcopal population.

This year our mission group re-built 40-year old cisterns, built sanitary bathroom facilities and worked to improve housing and living conditions in general in the community. We conducted a Christian Summer Bible School for the children of the

community. We distributed the many gifts of clothing, school supplies, religious items, prayer shawls and more donated by our eight member parishes at the farewell Eucharist Service held for us by the community of our partner parish, La Ascension. Our mission materials money funded sand, cement, lumber and materials for our work their. We also purchased parts and supplies for the heavy-duty trimmer we brought in last year as well as hammers, saws, a cordless power set and other hand tools. But, when asked what more we could bring next year, the answer all gave was “more people of God.” It is the physical contact and communion they value most.

***There is so much more to be done*** – so much we as Christians can do. While visiting a remote Quichua village, the chief expressed his dream of having their own Episcopal church built in their village where Eucharist is given on an irregular basis by the priest from our partner parish. The total cost to build their church is \$5,000.

There are only twenty-three Episcopal Parishes in the vast Diocese of Ecuador Central. Each parish struggles to provide spiritual direction and nourishment to the overwhelming numbers of Indigenous Ecuadorians seeking to join our Christian Family. The Seabury Deanery is blessed to be the only US mission group partnered in Christ to a parish in this region of the Amazon. We bring back with us the love and unending gratitude of the people of Puyo, Ecuador, the mission church, La Ascension, and the Episcopal Diocese of Ecuador Central. Our continuing ministerial relationship is the greatest gift we can give in the service of Christ our Lord.

In Christ’s love,

George Warner  
Seabury Deanery Treasurer  
Ecuador Mission Coordinator