



Promises and Rewards in a Shoebox

Oct. and Nov. in many churches marks the beginning of 'Operation Christmas Child' project when so many joyfully and sacrificially fill a box or 2 or 10 to bless children around the world. What a blessing it is for churches the world over receive the boxes as a means to share God's love through God's family. In February Puerta de Esperanza picked up 150 boxes. We extended an invitation for the opening celebration of a 12 week children's discipleship course after which each child who completes all requirements would receive a certificate. We just told them it would be a special Saturday they should not miss and to invite their friends. The response was overwhelming, 95 kids (many new) and 25 parents came for the party where we played, prayed, sang and learned from our

“But a certain Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion.
Luke 10:33

puppet team. We presented the workbooks 'The Great Adventure' provided with the Samaritan Purse shoe boxes and asked the kids to **promise** to be faithful to come for 12 Saturdays. then we gave a wonderful shoe box gift to each child. There are no words for the delight and unbelief as all of them opened their boxes together at the count of 3. That's when the room burst loudly with joy and excitement.

This made me think of how God gave me the greatest gift in Jesus even before I said yes to Him. Would the kids still complete their promise **AFTER** the **reward**? Yesterday was our first class and we are delighted that each age level group was full with kids eager to learn more about God and His plan for each of them.

Please pray for these kids and the group leaders who work hard each week so Christ will become the real source of hope for a lifetime. Thanks to all who cared enough to fill a box or 2 or 10.



Planting Trees

I can remember when Tim and I were young and we bought our first house. It was a new house on bare dirt so it needed lawn and a tree or two. We investigated (this was before the internet) which variety would grow the fastest, we wanted instant growth and shade without having to wait long. Fast forward 25+ years where we find ourselves once again with a place but this time much older and excited about planting trees, even from seeds, to watch them grow, slow was fine by us,,,,,now. This made me ask why, when we had more years to live, did we not want to commit to waiting for a tree to grow but now,with fewer years to enjoy it, do we jump right in to plant?

In November we celebrated 9 years together with you serving in Ecuador. A few have asked, "Why so long in one place with the same community?" We don't have an easy answer nor do

For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when heat comes; But its leaves will be green, And it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit.

Jeremiah 17:8

we understand God's timing. We do know He has asked us to put down roots and stay awhile. It's as if He is saying the flower garden of evangelism is beautiful and the vegetable garden of preaching gives food to the soul but there is soo much more. God loves the life and color in flowers and gardens but what He wants more than anything now is a forest of deeply rooted trees. We hear Him saying to plant a tree from my seed which I will cause to grow. Then plant another..... water them, fertilize them, protect them, watch them struggle and grow. Wait and watch He says, this will take time. The roots of my Word and love must go deep so my children can be strong and stand firm through the winds of trial. So they can offer shade to those in need, even until they produce fruit for ME.

There are seasons in our lives when God asks us to give Him everything and follow Him without reservation. Then out of obedience He blesses us with what we entrusted to Him ² and more.

Have you ever planted a tree? Some of the people God has given us to love are transplants. They struggle with the water of God's word as if they were desert dwellers not knowing their need to go deep. We have many children(seeds) whom we have known since they could walk who trust us and God with their whole heart but lack the size and strength to go deep yet. we are caring for all of them as we praise God for His great care of our fragile hearts which cause our roots to dig even deeper and our arms(limbs) to reach up to Him in praise.

Prayer Requests

- Kevin, Esther and baby James due April 30
- Financial resources to continue with ministry.
- All the children, youth and adults learning more about Jesus and changed lives.
- Youth ministry
- Music classes
- Unity and forgiveness.

I have much more to say about God and trees, perhaps I can continue this theme as we communicate this year. Meanwhile I must **thank you** all for helping plant many gardens here in Ecuador, let's stay with it to give God his forest!

Connections

November through December were very busy months here at The Door of Hope. We had a visit from our Vice President of field ministries Jim Ramsey. We were able to talk and share with Jim the vision God has given us for His work here in Ecuador.

We were blessed by a visit Thanksgiving week from an old friend John Dodds from Fredericksburg, TX. He had been traveling and ministering in Central and South America. He was headed to Nicaragua to work in a prison ministry so our kids decorated placemats with blessings for the prisoners and made bead crosses. It was a great way for our kids to connect to the church on a global level.



In December John and Colleen Eisenburg, Mission Society missionaries serving in Paraguay on their way for furlough in the US. They so blessed us by helping to take photographs of our ministry as well as just some great times of fellowship. We as a church were able to pray over them and bless them as they continued their journey.

Ways to get involved .

- Buy a window for the ministry center 6 windows \$200 each.
- Storage bench with cushions for Club house \$300
- Bookcase \$100 each
- Cabinets for ministry center \$150
- Desks \$50 each

Any donations for these projects should be sent to:

The Mission Society
**Designated DATWYLER
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 ACCOUNT**

Emanuel.... A long awaited decision.

Daina left for a visit with Kellyann’s family on New Years eve. After all the activities from the prior months and the chaos that followed, it felt very empty here. I had prepared a message for the first Sunday of the New Year, prepared the music for worship, cleaned the sanctuary and prepared communion to celebrate together. The hour grew closer for service and then almost past an hour still no one had shown up. I had really given up hope and felt like I had gone to a lot of work for nothing. About the time I was to lock everything up a young man named Emanuel showed up very upset. He and his wife, who is a member of our church, had been fighting for several days. He had helped with the construction of our house and we had always shared Jesus with him but he wanted nothing to do with Jesus. So he came to me that Sunday seeking his Savior. I shared Jesus with him once again and he



surrendered his heart to Jesus as his Lord and Savior. His countenance changed almost instantly and he went from hopelessness to a life filled with hope overflowing. This is the short version of this story that God is continuing to write. To Him be the glory.



Tax deductible gifts may be sent to:

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Lets connect

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