



OperationEcuador

FALL 2021



We are confident of this, that He who began a good work... will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

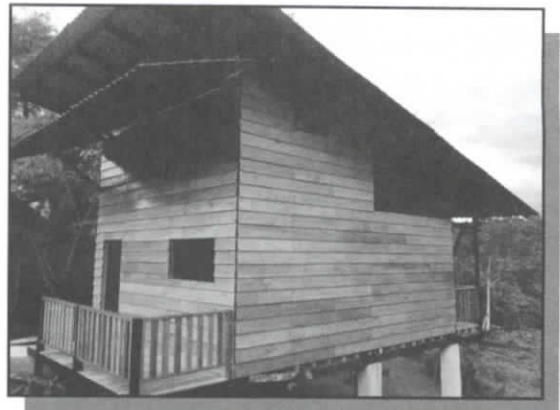
Philippians 1:6

## THE CALL TO MACEDONIA: 2010

Perhaps it would have been better if Paul had ignored the vision of the man of Macedonia begging him to "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" It wasn't on his itinerary, you know. Regardless, Luke records that "we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them." (Acts 16:10) But as subsequent events unfold, we wonder if there must have been some incorrect intelligence data.

The group's first stop in Macedonia was the city of Philippi. Being a Roman colony, this city did not have a synagogue, so it wasn't easy to find a group of God-fearing Jews gathered together. They found only a group of women meeting down by the river. Then they got mixed up with a "spirit-filled fortune teller," which resulted in them being seized, dragged into the market place before the authorities, stripped and severely beaten with rods, and finally thrown into a cell of the inner prison with their feet placed in stocks. To top it all, as if it had not been a sufficiently difficult week already, about midnight there was a violent earthquake that shook the foundations of the prison! Surely God had brought them to Macedonia to torture and kill them!

Well, we know the rest of the story, don't we? Lydia was one of that praying group of women down by the river, and she and her household were all immersed into Christ. Lydia was a significant addition to the kingdom as she evidently became part of Paul's financial backing for traveling and preaching the gospel. The jailor of the prison and his household were also baptized the very night of the earthquake! Finally, the city authorities who had ordered the flogging of Paul and Silas personally came and apologized for not having checked their Roman passports.



Just before Covid struck in 2020, the church in Sherman, Tx, honored Howard Smith by donating the funds to build this cabin at Kumanii. The construction has been gradual but is now finished and ready for use. Howard's cabin will always remind us of his many years of work on medical missions and his sincere love for the people of Ecuador.

### Operation Ecuador

www.operationecuador.org

Apartado 17-21-0217

Quito, Ecuador

South America

### Quito School of Biblical Studies

&

### QSOBS Mission Teams

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&

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Paul looks back upon that difficult beginning in Macedonia and writes to the Philippian church, "I thank my God **every** time I remember you. In **all** my prayers for **all** of you, I **always** pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Phil. 1:3-6) What a story! It's true, you know. Aren't we glad he listened to the Spirit's call to Macedonia?

Do you remember the 1946 classic, "It's a Wonderful Life," with James Stewart? An angel shows George Bailey what Bedford Falls would have been like if he had not lived his life there. Great movie! Impacting story! Well, what if, in 2010, we had not begun the ministry of Kumanii in that remote northwest corner of Ecuador, sharing the gospel of Christ among the beautiful people along the banks of the Cayapas River? What would the upper Cayapas River be like today without Kumanii? Many of you reading this article have been there and your lives have been positively impacted, even changed, because you experienced just a few difficult days on the Cayapas River. You remember faces and names in your daily prayers and perhaps even in your dreams: the countless images of children, young mothers, aged men and women flood your minds and warm your hearts. You see in your mind's eye the flowing Cayapas dotted with its villages and humble thatched-roof homes, women standing in the river laboring over their daily wash, countless children frolicking in the water, canoes full of well-dressed children on their way to school, old men fishing with cane poles in worn dug-out canoes hidden among the trees on the edge of the river, large rafts of logs

tied together and floating downriver with entire families on-board, villagers lining the tall banks of the river excitedly waving down to passers-by. The laughter, the smiles, the smells, the beauty.. they are all a special part of our memories!



Another long-awaited project has finally been finished! This new duplex cabin connects to another older cabin providing 4 bedrooms for our evangelists who rotate in and out of the river.

Today, a typical Sunday on the Cayapas finds our evangelists and member participants worshipping God in six different villages, both in Spanish and Chapala. People come from those villages or are "canoed" in for the services. Some children who weren't yet born in 2010 are now 10 years old. The ten-year-olds of 2010 are now living adult lives and beginning families. Some, who were born into Christ, like Gabriel's mother, Francisca, have passed from this life and await us on the other side of Jordan! And now, with Paul, we can thank God, lifting up brothers and sisters in Christ, Chachis and Afro-Ecuadorians alike, with joy in our hearts, assured that He who began a good work in their lives will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus! Aren't you glad we listened to the Spirit's call to carry the gospel of Christ to the Cayapas River? There is still much to do -- we've only just begun!

**Kent Marcum**

## So That Others Might Hear

### Honored:

Kent and Sharla Marcum (45th Anniversary!)

### Memorials:

David Tharp  
Travis Snyder  
Bill Stewart  
Chad Adams  
Elmo and Cleo Harper

Jim Miller  
Robert and Annette Moore  
Rick Kestner  
Donna Wallace

Honor one of your loved ones with a gift towards the mission advance at QSOBS. Please include a memo so that this might be properly allocated.

Faith Village Church of Christ,  
ATTN QSOBS  
4100 McNiel Ave Wichita Falls, TX 76308



## Farewell from the Schadegg Family

Our family's time in Ecuador has been short, but a few months ago, we made the decision to move back to the United States. This decision did not come lightly, nor was it sudden. It is certainly not at all what I had envisioned when we first moved to Ecuador. Those who know me know that I prefer to stay in a location for a long period of time. Our decision was the result of much prayer and discussion with our contacts at our supporting congregation, the Edmond Church of Christ. Many factors were discussed and analyzed over the last few months leading up to our decision.

Jill, Joshua and I left Ecuador on July 6th, and we are currently moving forward with a plan that as yet, only God knows about. I would like to continue in ministry in some form or fashion. Whether God leads me in the direction of a full-time paid position that does not include raising support, or another mission work, I simply do not know at this juncture. Obviously, we are open to hearing about and considering possible ministry opportunities during this time of transition. You may contact me at any time concerning this (contact information is below) and I will prayerfully take any opportunities before our Father. What am I looking for, you may ask? I am looking for a place where my outgoing, sometimes crazy, independent, personal evangelistic style can be utilized effectively, a place where I am driven to excel because I am being effective. I can preach, even every Sunday if need be, but overall, personal evangelism and getting involved in people's lives (of any age group) is what makes my heart sing.



The Schadegg, Campbell, and Marcum families gathered in Papallacta for one last memorable team retreat. We will miss you Schadegg family!.

I wish everyone who is involved and will be continuing with the work at Kumanii the utmost success in touching the hearts of those on the Cayapas River. I pray that you are continuing to serve and glorify our wonderful Father in heaven and find yourselves encouraged by those around you. Our lives are short, and one day we will be in eternal love and peace with no more need for encouragement, because we have fought the good fight and finished the race! Until that time, our priority is to share that love with others wherever we find ourselves.

*John Schadegg*



### Ways to Give



#### QSOBS

Faith Village Church of Christ  
4100 McNiel Ave  
Wichita Falls, TX 76308

#### Kumanii Or Medical Missions

37<sup>th</sup> St. Church of Christ  
2500 37th st.  
Snyder, TX 79549

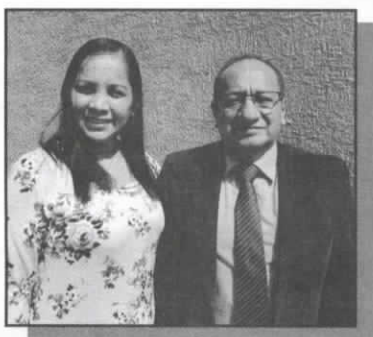
#### Camp Bellevue

Bellevue Church of Christ  
1212 104<sup>th</sup> SE  
Bellevue, WA 98004

## ● A Word from the New QSOBS Director ●

### Oswaldo Albarracin

Within the Churches of Christ, the Quito School of Biblical Studies is our largest theological institute in South America. Here God has allowed me, along with my wife Lourdes, the opportunity to serve first as a teacher and then as dean for 18 years. Beginning this school year, August 2021, we gladly accepted the challenge made by the Lord and the sponsoring elders at Southwest Church of Christ, to serve in the role of director of this esteemed school.



OSWALDO & LOURDES  
ALBARRACIN

My first aim is to ensure that the school continues to advance in its spiritual development and academic efficiency. For this, we have set three important objectives regarding how we want the QSOBS graduate to be transformed by their experience here. It is our goal that a student who leaves school first be a servant, second a good teacher, and last a great evangelist! We believe these are utmost important qualities for all who want to minister in the Lord's church.

On the academic side of things, we are putting in place some short-term objectives for each of the students according to their abilities and interests. If a student appears to be academically behind or can only give one year to their studies, they will still be awarded a certificate in Bible upon completion of 12 courses that year. If they can complete but two years, they can receive an equivalent to an American associate degree. However, the full bachelor's degree will still be reserved for only those students completing all three years of ministerial preparation including their practical thesis.

A second implementation we have opened this year is another year of internship for two to three of those students who have shown an exemplary spirit of service and dedication during their three years of study. For the 2021-2022 years, the Rivas and Canelón

families were selected. They are both from Venezuela and aspire to work in Salinas Ecuador following this new modality of practicum studies at the QSOBS.

If there is one thing that the pandemic has taught us, it is the need to focus on our technological advancement. The students at the QSOBS are now producing many good audiovisuals with the purpose of expanding their reach across various social networks for churches in Ecuador, and Latin America. Many brethren do not have the resources and time for a face-to-face education at school. So, though we are starting this project with the resources at hand (production and recording materials are expensive) we hope to increase production of many more good evangelistic lessons and advanced courses for church use.

The QSOBS is a powerful tool preparing men and women who carry the message of salvation to all parts of Latin America. The QSOBS prides itself to be at the center of serving and contributing to this missional objective. More than 422 million souls live just in South America; most have not heard the true good news of Christ. We believe that what is happening "from Ecuador to the World" is making a noticeable difference. Lourdes and I ask for the prayers of each one of you as we accept this new challenge as well as invite you to be part of this work through your prayers and collaboration according to your ability. God's blessings upon you.

*Oswaldo Albarracin*



The apartment of above Colon's baptistry has been temporarily converted into QSOBS' new recording studio.



## Assessment of Pandemic Impact on OE Operations

I bet the first thing you were thinking after reading the above title was: "Here goes another financial need pitch." The question of financial health during this uncertain time has been asked by many of you, and we so appreciate your concern. In short, the QSOBS has lost some regular donors, many of whom mentioned budget cuts due in part to the pandemic as a factor in their decision. Camp Bellevue and Kumanii also suffered some lost income due to the absence of groups that participate regularly in their ministry. But in all, God has provided! He has helped each of the Operation Ecuador ministries endure this time of trial, and He has done it, in many cases, by touching the hearts of you precious people to be attentive and give a little more to make up for our financial shortfalls. We look forward to sharing some of these details at the OE Summit on Oct 22-23, but let me express now how amazed I am at God's overabundant provision, "a good [kalos: also fitting, right, beautiful] measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over (Luke 6:38)."

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected socio-economic structures across the entire world. Even so, those countries who did not have reserves or the ability to give stimulus packages and unemployment assistance suffered to a greater degree. By and large, U.S. families have been at a greater advantage to weather the economic impact of these times.

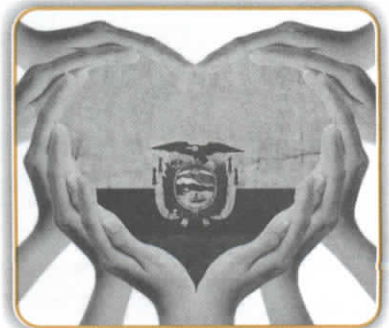
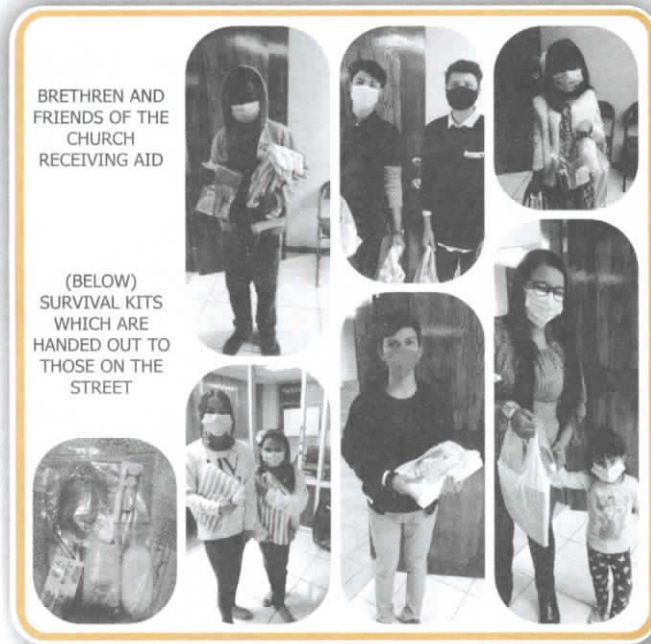
In Ecuador, the government provided little, if any, assistance to fledgling businesses or people out of work. It did help the lower class stay in their homes if unable to pay the rent and gave more leniency in regard to unpaid utility bills. But broadly speaking, the primary manner the Ecuadorian government gave assistance was to pass the responsibility for caring for

workers off to their employers. For many months, it was nearly impossible for employers to dismiss workers. The government also allowed the postponement of individual debts to be paid further down the road.

During this time, the church has rallied to "do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers (Gal. 6:10)." Local churches and U.S. churches joined forces through their offerings to bless those in need with some of the most basic things: food baskets, rental assistance, and medical emergencies. By American standards, the assistance would be but a drop in the bucket; however, the Ecuadorian Christians have truly felt affirmed in the love of a global church family that cares for them when so many have no such social networks.

Another note of hope in this dark time has been the unique communal connection experienced by the national church, scattered across the country and required to meet online. It has been encouraging to see members visiting virtually with their brethren all over Ecuador, whether by joining a marriage class in Manta, a leadership seminar from the EQEB, or a children's program organized by several Christian sisters across the country. QSOBS graduates meet daily in La Capilla [the Virtual Chapel], hosting various studies and gatherings for all age groups. People have made connections with brethren in other locations, and the experience has surprisingly strengthened ties among

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churches of Christ throughout Ecuador and the Americas.

Though these highlights have softened the negative impact of the great pandemic of 2020-2021, churches are excited to finally get back to in-person gatherings. Most Ecuadorian adults have now been vaccinated, and with new cases in decline, the government is allowing public gatherings to return to a 70% capacity. As the church of our Lord climbs out of this extended testing period, I pray that we continue to recognize our dependence on the Lord and our need for each other. Let us never suppress our awareness of those two things. Let the church arise, united in praise to Him for victory over the gates of Hades and all earthly calamity. Ours is the kingdom of Heaven!



**In July, the Colon Church resumed in-person services though many still connect on-line.**

*Joshua K. Marcum*

## In-Person Events Resume at Camp Bellevue

As Ecuador vaccinates more and more of its population, we are beginning to see a return to normalcy here. In April, we hosted our first overnight group in over a year, and in May, we welcomed our first US visitors since 2019! In August, a team of seven



**Thanks to the Fort Walton Beach Church of Christ for all their help with several camp improvement projects!**

came from the Ft. Walton Beach Church of Christ in Ft. Walton Beach, FL. Normally, they host our largest group of the year – a 200-person youth camp. They decided not to put that on this year, but instead spent the week helping to improve the facilities all throughout the camp. They gave the auditorium a fresh coat of paint, sanded tables in the dining room in preparation for refinishing and built two new gazebos for use as “outdoor classrooms.” One member of the group, a professional plumber, spent the week upgrading plumbing systems throughout the camp, including the installation of several new water heaters and water pumps! We are still a long way from pre-pandemic levels of activity here at the camp. However, we are already fielding requests for mission teams who want to come down in 2022 — hopefully that is a sign of better things to come!

In March, we made plans to bring back an in-person children's program at the camp. We decided to ease back into things with an every-other-Saturday program, inviting the kids to come to the camp in groups of 25-30, so as to be able to enforce safe social distancing. We hosted exactly one event before the government instituted country-wide weekend lockdowns and we were forced to cancel the remainder of the year. In June, however, we did host a





**One of the new gazebos, nearly completed.**

summer party for the kids, much like the Christmas party we had success with back in December. The kids came in two groups for three hours of fun outdoor activities, led by a dynamic group of young adults. We also served a snack and had some singing time. We hope we will be able to begin offering the Saturday program again in the fall. Eventually, the plan is to return to the pre-pandemic 4-days-a-week schedule, probably early next year.

In July, we hosted a retreat at the camp for several evangelists and their wives in our area. We took



**A big thank you to Larry and Diane Stephens for their sessions on creating a "Rule of Life" at the retreat for evangelists.**

advantage of my parents' visit to Ecuador and invited them to be the key-note speakers at the event. They led several sessions on developing a "rule of life." We also had some time in small groups for discussion and prayer. It was great to be able to offer this time of refreshment and encouragement to these weary workers for the Lord, and several of them let us know that they hope there will be more of these events in the future!

Our family is currently in the U.S. reporting to churches and reconnecting with family and friends – please keep us in your prayers for safe and Covid-free travels! We will be here until November and look forward to seeing many of you during our time stateside. Thank you for your partnership for the sake of the gospel at Camp Bellevue and throughout Ecuador and beyond.

*Laura for the Campbell family*



**A clown on stilts at the kids program summer party.**

# OperationEcuador

## Short-Term Mission Update

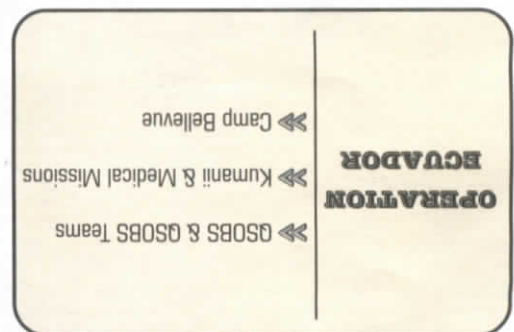
The current Covid-19 Pandemic has paused short term missions for most of 2020 and 2021. Now that things are improving, many of you have asked when it is advisable to schedule a mission trip again. The OE ministries are making plans to receive Medical Missions and mission groups again in 2022, however there are some important measures of which you should be aware:

1. Ecuador enforces a **strict bio security policy**. The law requires that a mask always be worn outside of the house or when in proximity to others. Note: Mask wearing regulations are a little more relaxed in Kumanii.
2. Currently **Ecuador requires a PCR upon entry**; most likely by the end of the year travelers will need to have a **vaccination card in addition to this**.
3. **Travelers must test negative for Covid upon reentry to the U.S.**; even if they have the vaccination, they must prove that they are Covid free before their flight. The good news is that tests can be taken at the airport just two hours before boarding.
4. **If you contract Covid while in Ecuador**, or are directly exposed to someone diagnosed with Covid, you must complete a mandatory 14-day quarantine.

Our goal is not to discourage you from coming; we have really missed you. We just want to inform you of the extra steps involved. Our hope is that if we meet travel requirements and adhere to bio security measures we can still interact with this brave new world.

**2022 Medical Missions** are tentatively scheduled for  
**February 25-March 6, and May 27-June 5.**

If interested, please contact Kent: kentmarcum7@gmail.com, 580 595 0799.



*Return Service Requested*

*1635 South Pueblo Blvd  
Pueblo, CO 81005*

**SOUTHWEST CHURCH OF CHRIST  
THE OPERATION ECUADOR NEWSLETTER**

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