

March 2015

Missions

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Thinking It Through

REX TROGDON

My Anchor Holds!

Hope in a hopeless world? We remember all too well what it was like when we had no hope and were without God in this world. An apt biblical illustration of life is the sea with its waves, tossing us aimlessly, leaving us adrift till we found Christ—the hope of the hopeless.

Speaking in nautical terms, the writer of Hebrews exhorts us to lay hold of this hope, which we have as “an anchor of the soul” that is “both sure and steadfast.” (Hebrews 6:19) This hope is sure in that it holds the promise of the future given by the God who cannot lie and has confirmed it by an oath. This hope is steadfast in that it holds us stable on the sea of life.

Hope defined is a definite expectation of glory in two realms: there and then in Heaven, here and now on earth. There and then, when it will be fully realized in Heaven as Peter calls it, “a living hope” that is tied to our “inheritance which is laid up in Heaven for you.” (1 Peter 1:3–4) Here and now, as Paul refers to this hope as “the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27)

I love the hymn (written by Lydia Baxter) that grasped these two realms of hope—earth and heaven in the phrase referring to the Lord Jesus as the “Hope of earth and joy of heaven.” To navigate from this “hope of earth” to the “joy of heaven,” let’s go back to the nautical terminology of Hebrews 6:20 which introduces the term forerunner. The background to this forerunner has to do with large ships coming into harbor. The movement of the sea often made it dangerous to approach the harbor under the ship’s own power. To prevent damage to the ship and harbor, a rope or anchor would be brought in a smaller boat and tied securely on shore to a post or rock. Then the ship could safely be drawn into port.

This is what our Lord has done for us. He has gone into Heaven as our forerunner, and as our anchor He has fastened us securely to Himself. He will draw us safely, sure and steadfast, into our haven of rest.

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure, while the billows roll,
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Savior’s love.¹*

Acts 27 gives us a real-life situation when Paul and Luke were on a ship. The ship was caught by a nor’easter and was driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea. Luke wrote, “Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on us, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.” (Acts 27:20) Paul, however, was full of hope and declared on deck, “I believe God!” (Acts 27:25) Where did Paul get such hope? His hope was in the Lord and based upon His Word.

Desperate situations call for desperate measures. Tragedies cause people to reach out in hope against hope. It is in those conditions that people see your stability, as a Christian, and “ask you a reason for the hope that is in you.” Be ready, Peter exhorts, to give an answer “with meekness and fear.” (1 Peter 3:15)

*When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.
On Christ, the solid Rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.²*

This rock-solid hope is available to everyone. The Lord Jesus spoke of His death on the cross saying, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” (John 12:32) Our anchor is upward, not downward. It doesn’t hold us back but draws us onward to our heavenly hope.

Today, through missions, He is drawing people from all over the earth. The missionary/apostle Paul asks the question of the Gentile believers at Thessalonica, “What is our hope?” He answers, “Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19) One day hope will be turned into glory when saints from every tribe and tongue and people and nation are gathered safe on that heavenly shore (Revelation 5:9). I hope it’s soon! ■

¹ Owens, Priscilla J. “Will Your Anchor Hold.” 1882

² Mote, Edward. “My Hope is Built on Nothing Less.” 1834

The Dark Side of the Jungle

Countering Myths and Superstitions with Biblical Truth

BY MICAH TUTTLE

Deep in the jungle of Peru, countless villages have never heard the Gospel. Hundreds upon hundreds of “pueblos” along the shores of remote jungle rivers are without churches, without a gospel witness, and without Bibles. Legends, animism and witchcraft have a tight hold on many who live in this area. These people are not half-naked natives who speak an unknown dialect but normal Spanish-speaking civilized Peruvians. Very few missionaries, if any, are focused on reaching them with the Gospel. Larger missions organizations have done a tremendous job with the initial contact of and Bible translation for the majority of tribal groups in South America, but by far the largest percentage of jungle people (mestizos: from a mixed native and Spanish descent) have been ignored by almost everyone.

Six years ago, my wife and I became aware of this pressing need. With the encouragement of the late Bert and Colleen Elliot, who formerly worked in the area, we moved our family to the northeastern Peruvian jungles. We felt a burning desire to make Christ’s name great in this neglected part of the country. We have seen both success and setbacks, encountering



many unique obstacles along the way. We recognize our need for the Lord’s strength in the midst of this great spiritual battle. One of the barriers to the Gospel has been that of superstition. It is often very difficult for the jungle people to look past their ancestral beliefs to see the light of Christ’s love that offers freedom from the dark side of the jungle. In this article, I’ll share several long-held superstitious beliefs, which are the cause of crippling fear and confusion, alongside the biblical truth I use to combat them.

Mermaids

You may be of the opinion that mermaids are mythological creatures, but in many parts of the jungle their existence is undisputed. They are considered to be real and dangerous. Cities, even huge empires of mermaids, are thought to exist in the deepest parts of the rivers. I have a good friend who is convinced that, as a child, he saw a mermaid caught by a fisherman who put her on display in the main square of his village. My friend is well respected and known to be an honest man. Was he imagining things? Could it have been one of those childhood dreams that one comes to think of as real?

Another man claimed to have seen a mermaid sitting on the beach combing her hair. He couldn’t resist the temptation of a closer look. He claims she grabbed him and took him to the underwater mermaid kingdom and imprisoned him for 100 years. When he finally escaped, he

returned to his own village where he was told a year had passed since they had seen him last. There are many other villagers with similar seemingly outlandish experiences.

Contrary to the popular opinion around here, I don’t believe that these stories are true. But one thing is sure, they serve as illustrations of the warnings found in Proverbs 7:21–26:

“With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, With her flattering lips she seduced him. Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter... Till an arrow struck his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, He did not know it would cost his life... Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her paths... all who were slain by her were strong men.”





Demon dolphins

Pink freshwater river dolphins called “bujeos colorados” are common in the Amazon river basin (*Inia geoffrensis*). The dark side of the jungle is reflected in the belief that these creatures are demon possessed, at times transforming into white people that ravage the villages.

In one village I visit, the people told me that at every worldly party several white men would show up out of nowhere to steal, rape and murder. The villagers decided to plant a trap. At the next party, they would catch them to figure out who they were. Reportedly, at midnight, with everything well underway, the men appeared. As planned, the villagers tried to grab the men. Those who were caught turned into “bujeos colorados” in their arms, and those who escaped dove into the river and swam away.

I wanted to laugh at how incredible their story was. The villagers who related this story to me simply replied, “You wouldn’t laugh if you understood our jungle.” I responded with Jesus’s words:

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)

A deceitful friend

Another deep-rooted belief has to do with an apparition called “El Chuyachaqui” by many. It is said to be an embodied demon that appears when one is walking alone on the jungle trail. Supposed eyewitnesses claim that he always appears in the form of a friend, loved one or family member to deceive whomever he might. He calls



Page 3: The jungle is shrouded in darkness and confusion. **This page (from top):** Micah holding a small boa in a flooded village; Micah standing over waterfalls where it is said there are mermaids; Santa Rosillo: one of the villages where an assembly has been planted; Micah open air preaching in a small village.



From left: Micah doing personal evangelism in the market; The Mayo River basin where it is said that the “Tunchi” dwells.

to follow him and, if obeyed, will lead one to imminent death. The only way to know with certainty that he is not who he appears to be is to look at his feet. If you see that one foot is a wild boar hoof, you'll know it is Chuyachaqui—and you must run for your life!

This superstition is a tremendous illustration of the truth of 2 Corinthians 11:14 which says: *“Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.”*

Wandering spirits

Almost everyone in the jungle believes in the existence of something called “El Tunchi.” Many have stories of their run-ins with him and he is greatly feared by all.

The tunchi is said to be the wandering spirit of a person who has died, roaming about the countryside haunting whomever he can. It makes a distinct whistling sound. If imitated, it will draw it closer and closer to terrorize and to kill. The devil himself, whom they call “El Maligno,” is believed to fly close behind the tunchi in order to catch and carry him to hell. According to the belief, under no circumstances should you come into contact with the Maligno, he being much worse than the tunchi.

I am constantly reminding the brothers that we who know the true and living God have nothing to fear because we are to *“be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual*

forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God.” (Ephesians 6:10–13)

Freedom from Satan’s schemes

We know that Satan’s schemes look different in different cultures. In western culture perhaps he is more effective by convincing people of the non-existence of God, the devil, even the whole spiritual realm. Here in the jungles of Peru his schemes are likely more compelling by working openly and using a fear of the spirit world to shackle the tormented. Some of what they believe is legend or fairy tale. Some are perceptions of personal experience. But Satan himself will use it all to keep people in bondage to sin and separated from God. Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ can free people from the heavy chains inflicted by the dark side of the jungle.

There are obstacles, some very unique, on every mission field. It seems to me as though the devil must have worked tediously weaving these animistic beliefs into the very fabric of Peruvian jungle culture in preparation for an immediate rejection of the Gospel. When speaking with people after open air preaching, I often hear something like the following: “I want what you’re talking about. You say that the chains can fall off in Christ. He died for me and rose again! You speak of grace, forgiveness, mercy, love! Eternal life! I want that! But I know that if I trust Christ it will upset the chuyachaqui, el tunchi, the mermaids and the bujeos colorados. They’ll be after me—I’m so afraid, I cannot.” As they sadly walk away, I imagine the sound of chains clanking as if draped over their backs, dragging on the ground behind them. If only I could convince them.



Some professing Christians would have us looking for fallen angels under every rock and behind every tree. I don't. Neither do I think that the demon world should be overemphasized. The Gospel and a Christ-centered message ought to be the focus of our preaching.

We also recognize that reality is unfolding on two levels. In the physical realm, we as humans have the leading roles (at least apparently) while the reality of spiritual things occurs just as assuredly, yet unseen. The two realities are interwoven. What happens in the spirit world affects what happens in the physical world and vice versa (2 Chronicles 18:18–22).

Unbelieving people everywhere have become victims of *"this present darkness."* (Ephesians 6:12) In Hosea 4:6 we read that these will be *"destroyed for lack of knowledge,"* unbelievers whose minds are darkened by the *"god of this world."* (2 Corinthians 4:4) But as Christians, we are called to see beyond the demons' schemes of sin and rebellion. They may be permitted for a season to wreak havoc, but we are reminded to stand with God and bear witness to His truth against the darkness. We are confident in the Scriptures that teach, *"Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."* (1 John 4:4)

We look for the day when Christ will defeat all his enemies, and *"the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."* (Habakkuk 2:14) Until then, we are to be on the alert! Let us not be ignorant of any of Satan's devices. We must learn to *"resist him, firm in our faith."* (1 Peter 5:9) And may we never forget, *"They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death."* (Revelation 12:11)

Until either death or the second coming of Christ, it is our responsibility to go into all the world, to make disciples by presenting a biblical Gospel that will transform captives of the Devil into *conquerors with Christ!* ■



Top right: Getting ready for a baptism on the shores of Achinamisa, one of the villages where an assembly has been planted; **Left (from top):** San Jose—one of the villages where an assembly has been planted; Normal Spanish-speaking Peruvian Mestizos who need the Gospel; Micah open air preaching in the main square of their jungle town, Tarapoto.

Micah and Amy Tuttle were commended in 2000 by Eastgate Bible Chapel, Portland, Oregon, and in 2003 by Riverside Bible Church in Dubuque, Iowa. They serve in Peru with their six children.



CMML Visits Colombia

Youth, Evangelism and Growth in Bogotá

BY CRAIG FRITCHEY

Bogotá, Colombia, is well-known for its troubled drug-trafficking history, but today it is a city where the Lord's work grows and thrives. When CMML was invited to visit this city, we knew we would see a growing work, but what we found was more exciting than we anticipated!

During our 10-day visit, Bob Dadd (CMML's president) and I observed the youthful vibrancy as well as the maturity of the Aposento Alto assemblies in Bogotá. Their love and devotion to Christ is contagious as they seek to share the Gospel throughout their city and the world.

Youth

A quick survey of an average assembly in Bogotá shows the youth of the movement. Many assemblies in Bogotá are less than 30 years old. There tends to be few elderly people and many young adults and families. Many elders are first-generation believers and are parents of the first group of children who have grown up in believing households. Young people are the main attendees at many of the meetings in Bogotá. We were invited to speak at a missionary prayer meeting on a Friday night, and the majority of those who attended were under 40 years old, coming straight from work. It was a privilege to listen to these young people fervently pray for the Lord's workers in other countries around the world.

Evangelism

There is an important focus on evangelism within the Bogotá assemblies. Twice a year assembly leaders gather at their camp, Villa Peniel, in the city Villa de Leyva to pray and study the Bible. We were able to attend one of these special weekend conferences. The focus of the conference was to discuss and plan how they could better fulfill the Great Commission in their local assemblies. After the teaching sessions, each local assembly met together to brainstorm and discuss how they could more effectively reach Bogotá and its surrounding areas for Christ as well as better disciple the believ-



Top: Bogotá, Colombia. Bottom (L-R): Youth Expo session; Gaby Ramirez.

ers in their local assembly. At the end of the weekend each assembly presented their ideas and struggles to the congregation for prayer and advice. We were amazed at the unity and care among the assemblies and were encouraged by their zeal for the Gospel.

We were excited to attend a youth conference called "Expo Glorific Arte" that was established by Sam Killins. The goal of the event was to provide young people with fresh ways to use their talents and interests to share the Gospel. Various young believers from all over Bogotá led seminars, each sharing a



Top (L-R): Low income area of Colombia; Villa de Leyva (location of camp); Traditional Colombian house. **Middle:** The assembly where Christian and Pilar Ramirez serve. **Bottom (L-R):** Youth Expo session; Sam Killins's young adult Bible study in Bogotá.

ership. In order to help in this area, the elders of the Bogotá assemblies have asked Bill Loudon and Christian Ramirez, primary instructors at the Emmaus Bible Training Institute, to shift the focus of the school from training all believers in basic Bible doctrines to a direct focus on training and equipping leaders in local assemblies. The elders even volunteered to be the first students! Please pray for Bill and Christian as they create the curriculum for this new endeavor, that it would be a powerful and effective tool in the next generation of qualified leadership.

An important aspect of missionary work in Bogotá is the modeling of healthy Christian families. Sheran Killins and Elaine Dubberly have tremendous ministries among women as they teach them how to love their husbands, care for their children and keep good homes. The Loudons, Ramirez, Dubberlys and Killins all hold married couple Bible studies on a regular basis and consider biblical marriage counseling to be an important aspect of their work.

The value of healthy missionary family testimonies cannot be overstated. The work of missionary wives such as Angela Loudon, Renee Easter and Pilar Rodriguez in raising their young families is so important to the mission field and provides a needed example for first-generation believers to follow.

unique way to present Christ through different activities such as cooking, drama, writing, art, sports, music and so on. Others discussed programs they are involved in that share the Gospel with at-risk children or other cultures. CMML presented a special seminar on innovative evangelism strategies missionaries use in difficult areas around the world. More than 200 youth attended this event and many stated that they will use these ideas in their local areas.

Another unique aspect to the youth expo was a salvation-doctrine debate between Brian Killins and a Catholic professor from a well-respected Jesuit university in Bogotá. It was impressive that, when the floor was opened for comments, the young people in the audience began to question the professor's theology and clearly shared the Gospel with him! This is a testimony to the work of the missionaries in grounding them in the Word of God.

Discipleship

In less than 35 years, 22 assemblies have been planted in Bogotá, and the goal is to continue planting more in the coming years. A key to establishing a new assembly is mature lead-

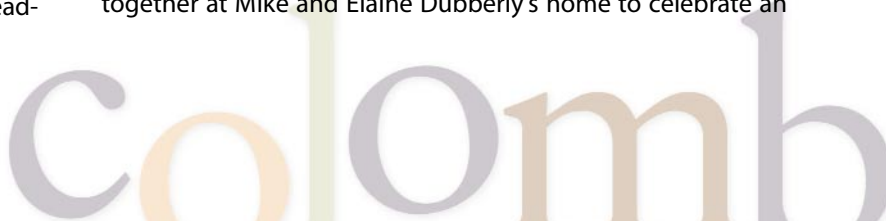
Looking Ahead

The assemblies in Bogotá have matured and national believers are now primarily responsible for the leadership in most assemblies. Colombian elders have taken up the call to shepherd the flock and tirelessly work to build up the believers and make Christ's name great in Bogotá. Most of these men work full-time jobs (50-plus hours a week) and care for their families while also dedicating 30-40 hours a week to the assembly. Please pray for wisdom and balance for these elders as they seek to provide for their families and the house of God.

This maturity has also led to a missional heart. Missionaries have been commended from assemblies in Bogotá to India and China. During our stay, we met with couples and individuals who have a desire to serve the Lord internationally in places as diverse as France, Ecuador and Mali. It is exciting to see a missionary-receiving country turn into a missionary-sending country.

An Early Thanksgiving

Every year the assembly missionaries in Bogotá gather together at Mike and Elaine Dubberly's home to celebrate an



American Thanksgiving. The celebration was held early so that we could participate. It was a blessing to spend time with the missionaries in Bogotá. We encourage you to send them an email and ask them to share with your assembly how God is working in their area and how you can pray.

The workers

Mike and Elaine Dubberly are dedicated to the Noroccidente assembly where there are about 200 believers in fellowship. The Dubberly children are also active in ministry and are a great help in the work.

David and Renee Easter, along with their six children, work with an assembly in Villa De Leyva. They have the responsibility of overseeing the assembly camp, Villa Peniel.

Brian and Sheran Killins have served in Bogotá since 1977. They continue to host Bible studies in their home, are actively involved in assembly meetings and activities and are regularly called upon for godly input and advice.

Sam Killins works primarily with young people. He recently started a new assembly in a section of the city where many young professionals live and work.

Ingrid Letendre uses her training as a social worker to minister to at-risk children in the poor inner-city areas of Bogotá. Her hope is to establish a camp ministry for these needy children.

Bill and Angela Loudon both grew up as missionary kids in Colombia, so their knowledge and experience defy their age. Along with their work in the Bible Institute, they are active in a large local assembly called J.Vargas.

William and Liliana Loudon work with the assemblies in Medellín (about eight hours north of Bogotá) and continue to actively seek opportunities to plant new assemblies in other areas.

Christian and Pilar Ramirez represent the next generation of Colombian leadership. As both U.S. commended missionaries and Colombian nationals, they are an important bridge in the Colombian assemblies. Christian will be the speaker at CMML's 26 Below Winter Retreat in 2016.

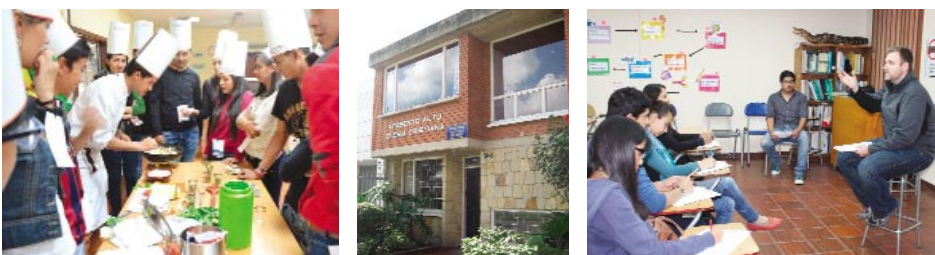
Unfortunately, Paul and Joanne Rogers and Mark Rogers were in Argentina during our visit, and Ruby Campbell and Gary and Vivian Michael were unable to come to Bogotá due to ministry commitments.

Pray for Bogotá

We were so grateful to visit the missionaries and assemblies in Bogotá, Colombia. We left refreshed and challenged by the zeal and work of the missionaries and believers in this great city. May we catch this zeal in our own areas!

Please pray for the work. Pray that the Lord would continue to raise up local leadership, that the young people would remain active and involved in the ministry, that the Gospel would continue to go out, that many would be saved, that the enemy would not hinder the work and that in all things the name of the Lord would be glorified. ■

Craig Fritchey is CMML's conference coordinator.



Top (L-R): Sharing the Gospel through cooking; Aposento Alto assembly; Craig leading the CMML session at the Youth Expo. **Middle:** Missionaries serving in Bogotá, Colombia. **Bottom (L-R):** Craig Fritchey and Bob Dadd; David Easter meeting with fellow elders from the Villa de Leyva assembly to discuss how to better reach out with the Gospel in their area of Bogotá; Bill Loudon meeting with assembly leaders to discuss how best to reach their area with the Gospel.

LIVING A TRANSPARENT LIFE

Record Crowd at CMML's
26 Below Retreat

BY TOM TURNER

CMML's 26 Below Winter Retreat attracted the largest group of attendees ever with 201 college, career and senior-high young people. Some came from as far as New Mexico, south Florida, Nebraska and Canada to hear Nate Bramsen (*Missionary Prayer Handbook Day 3*) present God's Word.

"Jesus doesn't want to be a part of your life," Nate said, "He wants to be ALL of it!" Thus started our journey through Psalm 51 with the theme Living a Transparent Life. "We have masks that we wear every day of our lives... because we are afraid of people really knowing who we are." Nate hammered home the life-changing solution that "transparency in our lives begins with brokenness, and brokenness comes through confession—'create in me a clean heart, O God.'"

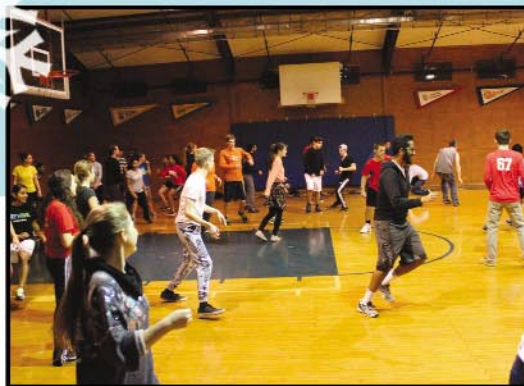
Saturday evening Nate encouraged the audience to select a friend and spend a few minutes talking and praying for one another prior to his closing prayer. As the evening ended it was evident that many had "done business with God" in their personal lives. Some even stayed behind in the meeting room for a while to spend time alone with God and allow Him to speak to them.

After a meaningful time around the Lord's Table with many young people participating, Nate presented his final message. If you want to know how much God loves you... take a look at the cross. The Word of God removes the mask from your life



and washes you clean. It makes you transparent. As the weekend came to a close this was the final challenge: "Transparency will evidence itself in your life because of an overwhelming passion for Jesus Christ! If you want a life where God will shine forth, then be still and listen to Him!"

Breakout sessions gave attendees the opportunity to learn about a topic that interested them most including: Sharing the Gospel; How I Became a Missionary; Short-Term Missions in Jamaica; and for girls only, Satisfied in Jesus: Purity and Struggles of the Heart. It was encouraging to see the passion





“Jesus doesn’t want to be a **PART** of your life, He wants to be **ALL** of it!”



of the presenters and how well each session was attended. As Nate spoke, he received word from Niger that 50-plus churches had been burned in the capital, Niamey, along with homes of many Christian leaders. CMML missionaries had evacuated to an embassy worker’s home and were safe. When the demonstrators came to burn their homes, since the missionaries were not inside, they passed them by. Surely the Lord was watching over His servants. Special prayer meetings were immediately convened at the conference, and almost 70 young people gathered together Saturday afternoon, rather than being

out on the ski slopes and sports venues, to ask the Lord’s intervention in the area and to pray for the salvation of those who were perpetrating these acts. Please pray for the situation in Niger which will no doubt change after this article goes to press. Nate’s three messages are available at CMML.us/26below2015. Lord willing, the next 26 Below Conference will be held January 15–17, 2016, with Christian Ramirez from Colombia. ■

Tom Turner is a CMML director and vice president, publishing.





Guayaquil, Ecuador

A Bright Future found at Hope of Bastion School

BY ERIN HAYES

I wasn't there but I've heard the story many times. My friend Amarilis, an Ecuadorian mother and school librarian, tells me of her experience 17 years ago. Two missionaries started a free school and invited her son to come to the kindergarten class. Amarilis and other moms in Bastion Popular, a squatter community with dirt roads, no formal addresses and mostly bamboo houses at the time, were suspicious and scared. But Amarilis and a few friends took the risk for the future of their children. When the Hope of Bastion School doors opened in 1997 they still didn't trust the generous strangers, so while the kids were in class, she and the other moms waited outside the school, circling to make sure their children were safe. Soon, Amarilis was asked to help in the school library, and all three of her kids graduated from Hope of Bastion School.

If you ever visit Guayaquil, Ecuador, Amarilis would love to tell you her story of how she was saved through the school, soccer and a missionary doing Bible studies at her house. Like any of us, her story continues, passing through intense heartache as well as seasons of joy and pride as she and her three children recently graduated from high school (Amarilis had the joy of graduating alongside her youngest child). Amarilis still works as the Hope of Bastion librarian and is just one of the many loving Christian role models that invest in our students.

Hope of Bastion School, 18 years after its start, still offers free Christian education for kindergarten through sixth-grade students in the community. The neighborhood has changed a lot dur-



Top left: A new family; **Top right (2):** Students at Hope of Bastion school. **Bottom :** Hope of Bastion school.

ing these years both physically and spiritually. More houses are cement with indoor plumbing, electricity and even some with Internet and landline phones. Many of the teenagers and young adults on the streets have passed through youth group, church or camp, and the local assembly is very well respected. The small church overflows on a regular basis, making it necessary to meet in the school gym.

Even though the neighborhood surrounding Hope of Bastion has drastically improved over the years, there are still many families in need and even more families who need the Lord. The school's mission is to help families and transform the community through the Gospel. Through the school, the Christian community can share God's love by providing a quality education, generously giving food and medical help in times of need, and openly sharing the Gospel with students and parents. The school offers Christian education, English, physical education and access to the school library and some computers. Missionaries run special after-school programs like art club, English club and instrumental music. While the local public schools have extreme overcrowding and lack materials, Hope of Bastion accepts only 20 kindergarten students every year. These students are chosen based on need after an application process and home visits and then accepted into the school on faith that God will continue to provide. Many students are matched up with a North American sponsor who prays, writes letters, and sup-

ports the school with a suggested gift of \$62 a month (or \$31 for a half sponsorship) through CMML or MSC. These relationships between student and sponsor grow over the years and many students see their sponsor families as role models, pen pals, or even mentors. Some sponsors even visit!

The school staff makes prayer a priority and the Gospel is shared at every school event with the hope that all will come to faith in Christ. Some school moms attend a weekly meeting where they learn how to pray, study the Bible and make crafts, while having fun together. A few ladies have been saved in the past few years, and the group is a great encouragement to everyone. These mothers also know about various family situations in the community and let the school staff and missionaries know when needs arise.

Recently, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education has made it very difficult for private schools to stay open. Minimum wage was raised, employers are required to pay for employee benefits (health insurance and social security), and expensive paperwork and new documentation is ongoing. God has been so generous with the Hope of Bastion School, and by His grace the doors are still open. The school must continue to comply with the new regulations, and plans are in the works for a complete school renovation, bringing everything up to code and preparing for the newly required seventh through ninth grades. The school leadership is planning for these new grades and praying for the necessary resources like bigger furniture, teachers for specialized subjects, and classroom materials. As the school year comes to a close in February, a small group of Canadian volunteers and Ecuadorian workers will begin con-



Top (main photo): English class; **Top (other photos L-R):** Missionaries Jessenia Bauman, Becky Martin and Erin Hayes; Church meeting in school gym; Amarilis the librarian; Children opening Christmas presents. **Bottom :** Streets of Bastion Popular.



Top: Moms' group. **Bottom (L-R):** Music students; Erin with her sponsor child.

struction. Lord willing, construction will be in full swing in March and April and finished for the start of school on May 4, 2015. Please pray for provisions for this project as well as for wisdom for those in charge.

Amarilis let me borrow the March 2000 issue of *Missions* magazine from the school library. Tim Horne wrote about the start of Hope of Bastion School and his prayer that "God will raise up our students to love Him and serve Him." God has answered that prayer many times over. One student from that first kindergarten class is now a deacon in our assembly. Another girl from that class is graduating college with her teaching degree and working part-time in the school. Many school graduates are now youth group and kids' club leaders at the church. My prayer echoes Tim's as I pray that God will continue to use the school for His glory in Guayaquil, Ecuador. During my own five years teaching English and music at Hope of Bastion, I have come to love this community and appreciate the value of investing in these future leaders. I am encouraged in the midst of the needs and uncertain future of the school by Ephesians 3:20-21: "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." ■



Erin Hayes, commended in 2008 by Valley Bible Chapel, Washington Township, New Jersey, has been in Ecuador since 2010. For more information about Hope of Bastion School, you may contact Erin at erinraeh@gmail.com or follow the school on Facebook.



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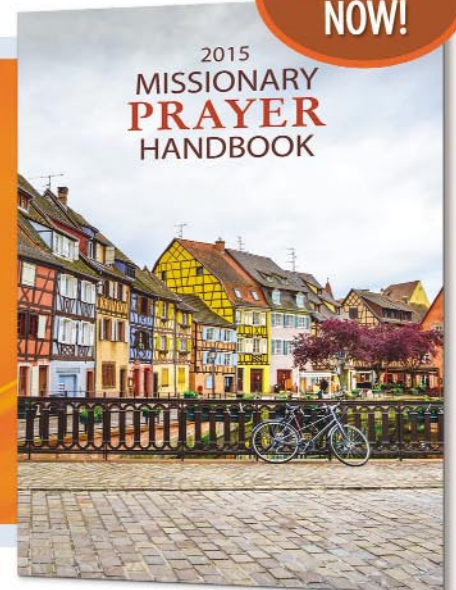
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