

Post-Lectureship Tour Reflections: 2008 Pan American Lectureship

By Bob Young

Friday morning we traveled to the equator. We enjoyed the visit even though we had been there during our 1996 visit to Ecuador. After some time at “the center of the world,” the group split in two—most were returning to Quito for a return flight to the US, but about 30 fellow-Christians participated in the post-lectureship tour. We boarded our bus, something we were going to become very familiar with, and on Friday afternoon the group traveled to Arasha, a rain forest resort. We arrived in time for a late lunch of delicious fish and spent the afternoon exploring the rain forest on foot, learning about the art of making chocolate, and visiting with other group members. We were able to become much better acquainted in the smaller group. At Arasha, the meals were superb. The evening meal was filet mignon, which was almost equaled by the next morning’s breakfast buffet. We enjoyed a torch-lit night hike on which we saw fascinating aspects of the flora and fauna in the rain forest. Our stay in the rain forest was less than 24 hours, but was an enjoyable and memorable experience.

On Saturday we traveled by bus to Santo Domingo, about a two-hour trip, and enjoyed lunch together, after which we checked into our motel. The motel was an older structure with narrow hallways. We met with the local church that afternoon about 5 PM and Jerry Lawlis preached with Berto Murillo interpreting. After the worship, we shared a nice time of fellowship with many different types of homemade bread and juices. I especially enjoyed the yucca bread. The baptistery at this church was interesting—it was a separate structure on the back patio, covered with a roof so that it resembled a gazebo. The pool was entirely above ground, so it had steps leading up on the outside and steps leading down on the inside of the baptistery. The church may have to leave this rented facility as early as January 2009. Afterward we ate in the motel restaurant with several members of the group—Sharla Marcum, the Shingletons from Pueblo, Colorado, Mel and Mel Latorre (father and son with Brazil missions roots), and Bob and Ridglae Stephens.

On Sunday morning we were up early to be ready for the 6:30 AM worship. After a quick breakfast in the hotel restaurant, we got on the bus for the long seven-hour trip to Portoviejo. When we arrived, it did not take Jan and me long to find the little ice cream shop right across the street from the motel. We met with the local church at 4 PM. The meeting we shared was their only assembly on that day. I preached in Spanish, and afterwards we shared fellowship and refreshments. The church had purchased yucca bread with a variety of juices and soft drinks. The work in Portoviejo is the oldest work of those established as a result of the work of QSBS. The church building is near the local mall. Work is underway to finish the second story, which will allow them to have a much larger assembly area. Once we got back to the motel, it was time to make one more trip to the ice cream shop with the Shingletons and Stephens.

We shared Monday morning breakfast with Kent Marcum. Monday meant another long bus trip as it was about five hours to Guayaquil. We met with one of the local churches (Central) at 7 PM. They are in a rented facility on a major road. Bob Stephens preached with Berto Murillo interpreting. There were a number of Quechua brothers and sisters present and we especially enjoyed the songs they presented for us in Quechua.

Tuesday morning we met with the South congregation in Guayaquil. This is the newest work established as a result of the work of QSBS. Both works in Guayaquil are under the oversight or sponsorship of the Arlington West congregation in Arlington, Texas. The Guayaquil south church is in a rented facility. When we got back to the hotel, I had to catch up on several work items since the return to the US was growing closer. We checked out of the hotel at 2 PM and took the bus to the airport for a short 45-minute flight back to Quito. Late afternoon, Jan and I went to the Indian market with the Shingletons, Elray and Jody Wilson, and the Stephens. Jan and I chose to venture out on our own and stopped by the Fried Banana café and restaurant for some avocado soup, shrimp pasta, and delightful tea and coffee.

The trip back to the US on Wednesday seemed almost anticlimactic. In closing I mention a few folks who shared the post-lectureship tour as we had time to become acquainted and share the stories of our spiritual journey. We especially enjoyed the time with Philip and Pat Slate and Bob and Nancy Webb, all from Murfreesboro, Tennessee. We also enjoyed many of the group from the Southwest church in Pueblo, Colorado. And above all, we must mention how special it was to spend extended time with Bob and Ridglae Stephens, our friends from West Virginia. Bob and I worked together at Ohio Valley College, and Bob and Ridglae had been with us on our first trip to Quito and the Pan American lectureship in 1996. To spend another 10 days with them on this return trip was especially meaningful!