

## 2020 Ecuador Mission Trip

On March 7 a team of seven left on a mission trip to Ecuador. First Baptist has been sending teams to Ecuador since 2005. Over the years, teams have worked with a number of different missionaries in the city of Cuenca located high in the Southern Andes Mountains – elevation approximately 8,700 feet. In recent years we have worked with Gary and Dena Pate of Pate Ministries - For the Children of Ecuador. Their ministry is focused on reaching children in remote villages surrounding Cuenca. They conduct bible clubs in 5 areas each week for three weeks a month. During the first week of the month, they do bible clubs in four more remote villages. The bible clubs are very similar to our Awana classes. There is a time for music, games, crafts, snacks, and a bible story. Each week the children are given bible verses to memorize. Prizes are given to those who can recite the verses in front of the group.

We worked with the once-a-month clubs located in Llaucay, Gonzol (3 ½ hours out one way), Namarin (2 ½ hours out one way) and Cachigalguay. The bible story for the children this week was the Good Samaritan. Hunter Gay did an outstanding job delivering the lesson. Tommy Loyd, Chris Ferguson, Landon Powell and Jimmy and Colby Griffin provided drama for the story. (Jimmy and Colby Griffin joined our group this week from North Carolina. Ladies in their church knitted hats for the children. These two were such a joy to work with.) While we don't work for numbers, the group did minister to approximately 200 children this week.



We also held a women's ministry in each of these communities. Women's ministry gives us an opportunity to make the women feel a little special while presenting the gospel message to them. Women in Ecuador are treated only a little better than dogs. They have so very little and labor extremely hard to get what little they have. We do a craft with them and the craft supports the bible lesson as well as gives the ladies

something practical they can use. This year they sewed crosses onto bags. The cross represented the hope we have in Christ which was the theme of the bible lesson. The women walk everywhere they go and the bags help them carry items. We serve them several items of food that they never could afford or have access to. We also serve hot, flavored tea. Again numbers are not that important but we witnessed to approximately 150 women. The women expressed their gratitude to us in many ways but especially with hugs. Many said how grateful they were that we had come.



There are many stories that could be shared but one in particular stands out. Fernando was our bus driver this week. He is the driver that the Pates use with all their teams. He is very friendly and a real joy to be around. He had a birthday during the week and we had planned on celebrating his birthday on Thursday night when our team and the Ecuador team that works with Gary and Dena along with their families have dinner together. On Thursday, while we were doing the children's club and women's ministry, the pastor of the church where we were meeting, Honorato Paguay, talked to Fernando and lead him to Christ. So we got to not only celebrate Fernando's birthday but his "birth" day as well.



Gary Pate, Honorato Paguay, Fernando, Andres Gomezcoello

Thank you, church members, for making it possible for a team to go to Ecuador each year.