

Peter McGillivray's Trip to Ecuador

This past August was a truly exciting and unforgettable one for me. I was fortunate and blessed enough to accompany my uncle, Dr. Jim McGillivray, of Collingwood, as well as 50 other medical personnel and helpers from across the U.S. and Canada on a Medical Group Mission to Ecuador. It was a wonderful and eye-opening experience.

The team consisted of 3 surgeons, 5 family practitioners, 1 anesthetist, 10 registered nurses, 2 dentists as well as numerous general helpers and 'grunts' like myself. After a few days in the capital city of Quito to orientate ourselves with the climate and culture, we traveled by bus through the high Andean plateau for several hours to the mission site of Pillaro, a city only slightly smaller than Newmarket. We proceeded to set up a surgical clinic in the small, primitive hospital there as well as sending smaller medical/dental teams out to the high mountain villages to set-up free walk-in clinics for the poorer, mostly Indian, population that farm the steep slopes of the countless volcanoes.

Many people from near and far traveled to take advantage of the free medical care being given by the "gringo" doctors. The clinics were seeing about 200 people per day with approximately 12-15 surgeries per day, 100 dental patients per day, as well as hundreds of fluoride treatments given to little children by me and a friend.

Ecuador is a land of many contrasts though. Where we saw breathtakingly high mountain peaks and volcanoes, we also saw deep, sweeping canyons and valleys. Where we saw barren, arid desert-scrub we also saw dense jungles teeming with life. So it was also among the people. Where we saw the appalling poverty of people who cannot afford shoes let alone adequate health care, we also saw rich oil barons with BMW's taking advantage of Quito's new modern hospital that would make staff at York County drool with envy.

However, we also had a few spare hours on the weekends and were able to do a bit of touring as well as visiting amongst the Ecuadorian population. We went to the hot springs of Banos (a major tourist resort) as well as a few of us climbed Mt. Chimbarazo to the snow line. We met and chatted with countless Ecuadorians who have to be the most gentle and gracious people on the earth.

Many thanks to the many generous members of St. Andrew's who donated a full hockey bag and a half of toys to be handed out to the Ecuadorian children at the clinics and the hospital. One thing that one cannot capture on camera film is the joy and thanksgiving in the hearts of some of the kids who received not only badly needed health care and medicine but brand new toys and a renewed sense of hope as well.

Thank you, Peter.

Sympathy is extended to Toob, Jeanne and Kevin Van Dalen on the recent passing of Toob's mother in Barrie.

SIGN UP TO GROW !

Adults are never too old to learn and never can know enough. Continue to grow in the knowledge and love of Christ by participating in one or all of the following opportunities:

Sunday Morning 8:00 a.m. - "Modern Issues in David Hoath - Leader Christian Living"
Coffee and muffins served (free)
6 sessions: Sept. 17 - Oct. 17, 1995

Sunday Evening 7:00 p.m. - "Origins of the Bible"
Jeanne and Toob Van Dalen - Leaders
6 sessions: Nov. 5 - Dec. 10, 1995

Wednesday Evening 7:30 p.m. - "Where in the World John Kenney - Leader is God ?"
5 sessions: Oct 4 - Nov. 1, 1995

Thursday Morning 10:00 a.m. - "From Bondage to Freedom"
Angus McGillivray - Leader
A Study in Exodus
Continues through to December - Coffee served (free)