



Stop worrying, then, over questions such as, "what are we to eat?" or "what are we to drink?" or "what are we to wear?" Those without faith are always running after these things. God knows everything you need. (Matthew 6:31-32 The Inclusive Bible)

To our Friends and Family,

As we boarded the canoe, we had the sense we were about to come as close as we ever had to God's creation in its original form, a place where God's handiwork has hardly been altered and God's presence is easily felt – wonder and awe overcame us.

The sign posted at this boundary of Yasuni National Park told us we were crossing into the "Tagaeri-Taromenane Intangible Zone". Only four days before we had first met the woman who brought us here, Yolanda, while picking up our clothes at our laundromat in Tena. The owners of the laundry, Mariuxi and Angel -- who are quickly becoming good friends -- suggested we accompany Yolanda on this trip to meet her brother, Cahuiya, an indigenous believer who lives deep in the rain forest. And so we did.

We didn't realize until we saw the sign, however, that we were about to travel through the zone set aside by the Ecuadorian government to protect un-contacted peoples, native groups who want nothing to do with civilization. Access to the area is tightly controlled, restricted only to people who travel with native guides, like Conan, the pilot of our boat and Yolanda's second brother.

While many Waorani are leaving their jungle homes in search of work and opportunities brought here by the presence of oil drilling, at least one family's deeply-rooted sense of place and strong faith in God makes them determined to maintain their native Waorani customs. Yolanda's brother, Cahuiya, lived on this river until the age of 14, when he became part of a group of children relocated by missionaries to the Cururai region to receive an education. This is where he met his wife, Mima. Twenty years later they

moved back to the Shiripuno River to escape the noise, pollution and distractions of urban life and live in the way of their ancestors—but with a Christian mindset.



In a time when many Waorani are turning to the ways of the colonos (the “outsiders” or, literally, “colonists”), the family’s strong faith helps them retain their indigenous lifestyle, avoiding the addictions to alcohol and drugs, materialism and consumerism that have conquered many of their neighbors. Cahuiya has a deep respect for God’s creation and is an advocate for protecting his native rainforest. They are blessed to live in what scientists consider the most biologically-diverse region on earth and are intent on helping keep it that way.

As you pray, you can thank God for:

- Believers like Cahuiya, Mima, her uncle and aunt, and other indigenous people who have found ways to embrace Christianity while retaining many of their native customs
- Our family’s discovery of a church in Muyuna, less than two miles from our home. Thanks to Mariuxi and Angel for inviting us there!
- The recent acquisition of a vehicle -- a twenty-year old, four-wheel drive Toyota -- to help us navigate river crossings and muddy roads
- Invitations to participate in a variety of events with local church groups

You can ask God for:

- Wisdom to discern which invitations to accept
- Patience when events are cancelled and schedules are changed
- The ability to communicate with indigenous people whose language and way of life are so different from our own

We appreciate your partnering with us as we seek to engage this part of the world with the whole gospel of Jesus Christ.

Please visit our updated website, www.twowaymission.net, to see photos and archived copies of prayer letters and other writings.

In Christ, The Ross Richer Family

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be as well. (Matthew 6:21)