



June 10, 2015 – Tena, Ecuador

To our Friends and Family,

Greetings from the foothills of the Andes Mountains! We trust this letter finds you well.

Our family is preparing to return to the US in two weeks. We already look forward to reconnecting with neighbors and new friends here in Ecuador when we come back in January. Meanwhile, it will be good to reunite with our community of faith in the North, to share what we have learned in Ecuador and discern next steps.



God has opened up many points of connection since we last wrote. One of these happened on Easter weekend at a gathering of hundreds of *Kichwa* believers in the community of Shandia. We heard joyful singing, shared filling meals and bathed in a freezing

cold river. Our conversations led to invitations to share messages and sing at several other churches in the area. We'll be returning to one of these, in Nuevo Paraiso, with a Youth Venture group from the US for a three-day youth and children's program next week.



In April we also traveled to the mountain town of Calacalí for a retreat with other Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Central Committee workers. It was valuable to share stories with our colleagues as well as get to know other leaders of the newly-formed *ICAME* (Mennonite Anabaptist Christian Church of Ecuador).



Last month we welcomed a group of twenty-one Goshen College students for a May-term course entitled "Ecological Economics in Ecuador". We traveled deep into the rainforest to learn about oil, agriculture, tourism and strategies for sustainable development.

The following week, we taught a course called "Loving our Neighbors: Creation Care and Economic Justice" for the ProPaz Biblical and Theological Studies program at Quito Mennonite Church. We

were particularly inspired by Randy Borman (wearing the plaid shirt in this photo), a guest speaker we met while putting together the Goshen College May term course. The son of



North American missionaries, Randy grew up among the *Cofan* people and has devoted his life to their cultural, environmental and spiritual survival. We sense that God has placed Randy and his wife Amelia in our path as mentors and guides as we consider how best to relate to indigenous neighbors and communities.

We will close with Jamie Arpin-Ricci's paraphrase of the Disciples Prayer:

**FATHER GOD, WHO UNITES US TOGETHER
AS ONE BODY, ONE FAMILY, SISTER
AND BROTHER.**

**MAY YOUR NAME BE MADE HOLY BY YOUR
WORD AND BY THE WITNESS OF
US, YOUR PEOPLE.**

**MAY YOUR KINGDOM BE ESTABLISHED HERE
AND NOW, IN AND THROUGH US.**

**MAY YOUR WILL BE OUR FIRST AND MOST
IMMEDIATE PRIORITY, JUST AS IT IS
TO THE ANGELS ABOVE.**

**PROVIDE FOR US ALL AND ONLY WHAT WE
NEED FOR LIFE TOGETHER AND
OBEDIENCE TO YOU.**

**LET THE GIFT OF YOUR UNDESERVED
GRACE FOR US OVERFLOW FROM US
ONTO THOSE WHO HAVE WRONGED**

**US, WHERE EVERYTHING THAT IS
OWED IS FULLY FORGIVEN.**

**LEAD US ON YOUR PATH, AWAY FROM THE
EMPTY PROMISES OF OUR SELFISH
TEMPTATIONS.**

**RESCUE US FROM EVERY SCHEME OF SIN
AND DARKNESS WHICH WOULD TAKE
US FROM THAT PATH.**

**FOR YOU ARE KING, THIS IS YOUR
KINGDOM AND WE ARE YOUR
CITIZENS AND SERVANTS.**

**ALL WE ARE, ALL WE HAVE AND ALL WE
WILL DO IS BY YOUR POWER AND
FOR YOUR GLORY ALONE, IN THE
PAST, IN THE PRESENT AND IN THE
FUTURE. AMEN.**

The Ross Richer Family