

*"I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly." John 10:10*

# EXPRESSIONS OF ECUADOR

October 2011

## Welcome Back to Ecuador... "Hey, we're not in Kansas anymore!"

After spending a month back in the states for home-ministry time visiting friends, family, and supporting churches, we arrived back in Ecuador just as Daniel's kindergarten year was kicking off. And we were all quickly reminded that we weren't in Kansas anymore! One usual morning on the way to drop the boys off at school, we were driving down a main thoroughfare in Cuenca playing the "I Spy" game and Daniel "spied" a group of 5 goats standing at the cross walk waiting to cross the street with their herder and then at the very next stoplight Nathan noticed a big mama cow and her two calves waiting to cross the street to be by the river for some leisurely "city" grazing. Now those are sites that you may see out in the country on farmlands in Kansas but not in the middle of Kansas City, which Cuenca, a city of 500,000 would be comparable to!

We also were recently invited to Daniel's first "paseo" or school field trip organized by the parent's committee as a family social for all the families to get to know each other. Again we quickly realized that we're not in Kansas anymore as we thought we would be arriving casually late yet really on-time here in Ecuador at 11am when the invite said 10am, and we were the first ones to show up! Then as they called all of us in for lunch after a potato-sack race and an Ecuavolleyball game (basically 3-on-3 volleyball with a 10 foot net), we realized just how Ecuadorian our boys have become when they went to get their plate of food passing by the roasted pig's head without even blinking an eye or saying any comment as the host pulled meat off the pig's body and propped his head off to one side, yet we chuckled on the inside wondering what their cousins in Kansas would have thought and said!

In spite of all these cultural differences and the

fact that we really aren't in Kansas anymore, we truly can say like Paul did in 1 Corinthians 9:22 that we have become Ecuadorian (well at least 75%) so that by all possible means (spying cows and goats crossing major streets in the city, eating roasted pig, entering the Indy 500 every morning with city buses and motos, etc...) we may have the joy of seeing many Ecuadorians come to know and follow Jesus! And we can also say like Paul did in Philipians that we truly carry Ecuador in our hearts and long for all Ecuadorians with the affection of Christ Jesus as Ecuador is becoming more and more home and Ecuadorians are becoming very much a second family to us.

Even though there are moments when we wish we had Dorothy's red slippers and could just be a heel-click away from being transported back to Kansas, there also have been plenty of moments that God has soothed those "longing-for-Kansas" feelings with a joy of seeing one of our youth step up into leadership and begin to help her friends know and experience the difference Jesus can make or a couple who has been attending marriage class report from going from a 10% score on whether they feel united in their marriage to an 80% score now. Or for those spontaneous conversations that God opens up while we are waiting to pick up our boys at school or hitting the volleyball around that we may "give an answer to everyone who asks us to give the reason for the hope that we have in our hearts as we've set Jesus apart as Lord" (1 Peter 3:15).

So to sum it all up, life is good, albeit hard at times, but we're alive and well and glad to be back in our adopted home country, serving the Lord as he sees fit.

*Sharing in His abundant life anywhere (Kansas wheat field or Ecuador city corner),*

*George, Sheree, Daniel and Nathan*

## Things we are thankful for:

- Couples and men continue to come and grow in both fellowship/study times we offer weekly!
- The precious time we spent back in Kansas with friends and family and supporters... rejoicing again with Paul that you are on our team (Philippians 1:3-8)!
- Daniel and Nathan are in school and adjusting well, making friends, speaking Spanish, and even learning typical, Ecuadorian dances (that was Daniel's favorite part of the day yesterday)!

## Things you can pray for:

- That we finish the couple's book study well, especially these next few weeks as we cover the theme of "Healthy, Biblical Sexuality in Marriage" that couples would experience more unity and healing here.
- That the youth leaders have a renewed sense of commitment and passion for their generation to know and follow Christ and for perseverance in running the race well.
- That God would fill us with His wisdom for an unusual amount of life and marriage counseling requests lately.

### Timeline/Upcoming Events:

July 31: Daniel turned 5 and started kindergarten in September!

October: Bible Month ending with a special all-day Bible-fiesta on 10/30

Nov 3-6: "Fiestas de Cuenca" (Independence Celebration for Cuenca)

Nov 26-Dec 6: Hosting a small pastoral team from NY

Dec 7- Sheree's Birthday!

Oct-Dec: Ongoing couple's book study on Wed, men's group on Thur, youth leader mentoring on Fri, youth group Sat, and sports time on Sun!

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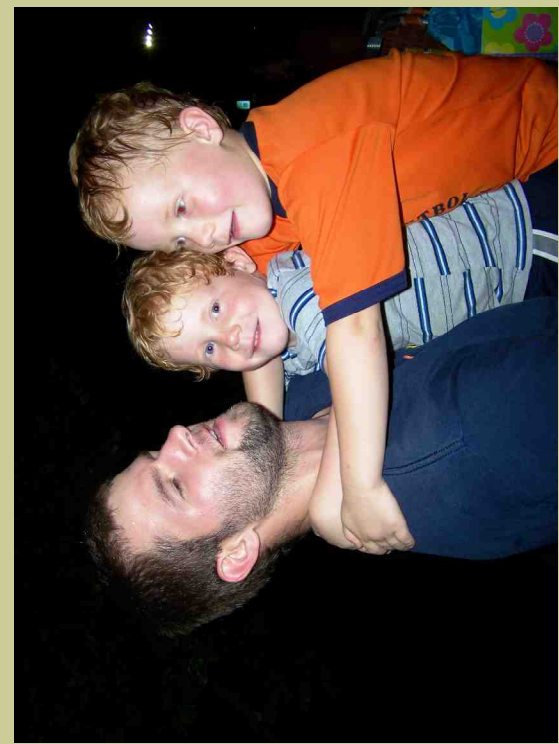
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PICTURES PAGE



**TOP LEFT:** Having fun with family back in US in August camps.



**TOP RIGHT:** Interns hosting summer soccer



**BOTTOM LEFT:** Youth event with US and Ecuadorian youth.



**BOTTOM RIGHT:** Daniel's new teachers.