

# NEWS FROM MIDDLE EARTH

Update from the Crouse family in Quito, Ecuador  
March 2021



## Praises

- God's timing for return to Ecuador - we arrived Feb 3.
- Opportunities for meaningful ministry

## Prayer Petitions

- Sat. March 27 facilitator's training session that Becky will be leading
- For us to proceed with God's strength and His wisdom
- For God's care over Marissa and parents while far away
- Residency visa applications and vehicle purchase

## UPHILL STARTS

During our first three years in Ecuador, we owned a diesel powered vehicle with manual transmission. It certainly was a useful vehicle, especially in slippery conditions, but sometimes it was simply impossible to get going on a hill from a dead stop.

Truth be told, more than once we had to back down the ramp at the parking garage so we could get a better start!

We are excited to be back in Ecuador and once again fully involved in various ministries nationally, as well as regionally. Many of the ministry opportunities and projects are in the beginning stages. Sometimes the going is difficult and uncharted, and it feels like trying to go uphill from a dead stop. Only with God's strength through your prayer support will we be able keeping moving up and onward into the wonderful adventures that God has ahead for us and the Free Methodist Church in Latin America.

## **ECUADOR -- PASTORAL FORMATION**

Two years ago, the Free Methodist Church in Ecuador formed its pastoral preparation board (known as a MEG board in the U.S.). JR is an integral part of it and serves as a mentor to three pastoral candidates and one ordained pastor. JR has also been busy helping another board member learn how to use a new platform to track each candidate's studies and evaluations so that each person can be guided through the process in an intentional and timely way. Please join us in praying that this board will develop its rhythms and procedures quickly, and that many new leaders will begin the preparation process as present leaders often carry heavy loads.

## **FACILITATOR TRAINING**

You may recall that I (Becky) wrote a guide for facilitators last year and that we held our first workshop based upon the material in August. This month we will start the next round of training. We will hold 4-5 virtual workshops over the next three months for people who are or could potentially facilitate pastoral formation classes throughout Latin America. I have also been asked to do facilitator training and to help develop a process for selecting facilitators for our area-wide virtual training center, which has been named CenForME (Center for On-line Formation). The process is a bit messy in the initial stages, and the need for trained facilitators is presently much greater than the supply. We would appreciate your prayers for strength and wisdom. We especially ask that God would guide us to more Latin American leaders who are already excelling in this area who can become part of the planning, training, and facilitating team.



In addition to training adults, our organization believes that the discipleship process needs to start with the children. Presently Latin American children's workers are using whatever materials they can get their hands on. They would love to use materials that have been written especially for them with a Free Methodist viewpoint that teaches the children how to have a personal relationship with God and how to express that relationship through service to people around them. To that end, I am part of a team that is adapting and translating a children's curriculum that can be used throughout Latin America for Sunday schools and children's clubs. The first section of lessons is almost complete, and we will be testing the materials with children in a few pilot projects. Since the material has some components that are different than traditional curricula, we will need to do some teacher training. I am preparing a short teachers' guide and will be planning some workshops for the teachers from the pilot projects in April, so that they can begin using the materials in May. Thank you for your prayers for this whole process. If you would like to donate towards the costs of developing this curriculum

which has the potential to reach thousands of children, please click [HERE](#)

We are glad to be back in Quito after an absence of a year and half. As always, thank you so much for your faithful prayers and financial support. You are an indispensable part of our team. We pray for God's blessings and for the multiplication of the small beginnings that we offer to Him.

Your partners in Latin America,

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J.R. Becky Marissa Alena