

# Welch Family News

Craig, Celeste, Brooke, Courtney, Natalie Joy, and Valerie Grace Welch—serving in Ecuador

## Ministry Update

After a long medical sabbatical in Florida, we are back and settled in here in Ecuador. We came back down to a very different mood than when we left. There has been a real spirit of fear and sadness, primarily because of the death of Maria's brother Romulo. There is some speculation in the details, but apparently, he was murdered near Sacha Runa and his body dumped off the road near Mera. He was the only one of Maria's immediate family that had not accepted Christ, and his family has been deeply grieved. Many of the people of Sacha Runa are also now afraid to walk down the road at night and are less trustful of their neighbors, including us. I was working outside the other evening when I felt a tremendous "push" from God to go down to the river near Sacha Runa where I take my prayer walks in the mornings. I didn't know what God had in store for me, but I went with the expectation of something big as I don't get big pushes too often. What God showed me was a picture of a darkness that exists here in Ecuador that isn't always visible. There is violence, abuse, and poverty as in many other places, but there is also a sense of acceptance of these things, an oppression that says nothing can be done about it and no vision that a better life is available. I have felt that God is opening another level to our ministry in allowing us to share with His children that not only does a better existence await us in Glory, but that we have purpose, hope, and the grace needed to affect the world around us today, that He does not mean for us to live in hopeless despair and fear.



We made another trip to the prison in Macas. I was going to take some good pictures of the workshop with the tools we donated, but the guard wouldn't let me take in my camera. It was good to see many of the same people attending the church services there. They have received permission to build a permanent church building on top of an office building there where they could have Bible studies and classes during the week in addition to week-end services. We will keep you updated on how that progresses. On the way back from Macas, we stopped at the Shuar village where Pastor Sely also preaches. We will be doing some work with them in the future.

## Church Happenings

We have had two baptism ceremonies since we have been back with twelve people being baptized. Some participants were from the Sacha Runa church and some from our sister church in Puyo. We performed



the baptisms right down at the river and due to the public location, many non-believers were able to hear our singing and the testimonies of those being baptized and how Jesus has changed their lives. Among those baptized were Maria's mother, sister, niece, husband, and oldest son. Also baptized were two of the family of six girls we have been working with. One of the other church members has just donated this family a piece of land for them to build their own home on.



*Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Heb 10:22*

# Prayer Requests and Praises



- Pray that the spirit of oppression and fear in Sacha Runa will be overcome by the liberation of the Holy Spirit.
- Pray that our girls will adjust well to their first time in school.
- Pray that the clean water well will be able to be installed in Sacha Runa.
- Pray for the people of Sacha Runa—that they will see their need for the Lord and that they will desire to walk through life with Him
- Praise that God is showing us new ministry opportunities and ways to serve people here that we had not imagined.
- Pray that we would walk after the Spirit continually and be sensitive to His leading.
- Praise that Lupe, mother of the six girls we've been working with, has had a piece of land donated to her from someone at the church and prayer that we can help her build a home for her family.
- Pray that we will be wholeheartedly submitted to the leading of the Holy Spirit and open to all that He would have us to do here in Ecuador.

## High Points

- We now have two children's books fully translated in Quechua of the Pastaza. The next phase will be printing books for Sacha Runa as well as Quechua communities further in the jungle. We will also begin recording to make a movie of the gospel presentation.
- We have 7 of the most needy children from Sacha Runa and the Shuar community coming to our home after school to receive physical and spiritual nourishment.
- Twelve people baptized! Many lives are being transformed and people are also being disciplined.
- Three teams from the US will be coming in the upcoming months to assist with medical, construction, and discipleship.
- Brooke, Courtney, Natalie Joy and Valerie Grace are enjoying being back in Ecuador.



## We would love to hear from you!

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