

One of the first things that we noticed in Ecuador was the sense of community. And hopefully you all should already feel that just by sitting close together and giving one another Besitos, and probably all being about equally confused by the Spanish on the screen.

Our theme for the week happened to be “He's got the whole world in His hands,” a simple theme that was really amazingly appropriate in several different ways. Not only does he have First Baptist or First Methodist or Christ Episcopal Churches in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, USA in his hands. Not only does he have Mission Emaus in Quito, Ecuador in His hands. He's got the whole world. And he's got us all in his hands together. A worldwide community of faith.

I talked about faith a couple of weeks ago at my church. And if you'd like to hear my whole spiel on the amazing faith-based orphanage we went to, Heather will tell you I'll be glad to talk until I'm blue in the face and you're bleeding from the ears. But tonight I want us to focus on that sense of community that we should get from our faith.

We traveled hours on multiple planes to get where we were going. And when we arrived, most of the conversation around us was going on in Spanish. Now one thing that you'd expect to be very important to having a sense of community would be functional communication. And I think we probably take for granted the ability to get our ideas across so easily when everyone around us can actually understand the words we use.



This is Don Rodrigo. He was in charge of the construction projects we did at Emaus, the church in Quito. Now, I speak pretty much no Spanish. Raquel has graded my classwork, she can confirm that. Don Rodrigo spoke absolutely no English, unless you count the phrase he directed at us most often during construction: “No, no, no.”

The other two guys, Coleman, Bradham, and I, all helped Don Rodrigo build a table, among other things. Rodrigo did an amazing job of communicating directions to us demonstrating with a hammer and chisel and saw on the first couple pieces of wood we used. And the three of us did an amazing job of communicating right back at him by not chiseling enough, sawing off the wrong end of rather important support for the table and taking about an hour to do a job I'm sure he could have pulled off in less than fifteen minutes. We communicated our total incompetence and the message came across loud and clear in whichever language you like.

Coleman and Bradham got progressively better at building stuff. I played a lot of guitar. But at the end of the week when we were all saying good-bye to our friends at Emaus, Don Rodrigo gave me a hug and a big, genuine smile and he mimed playing the guitar. Neither of us used any words. But he communicated to me that he appreciated my musical skills just as much as I appreciated his carpentry. And I realized that after several days of work, there were not only two new tables in the church, but there were a lot of kids who knew some new music that we'd translated and we'd had quite a bit of worship music. He conveyed not only his appreciation, but a sense that we both did something to add to

that community of faith, and for the glory of God.

So we're going to sing one more song in Spanish and then one in English.

[music]

While we were there, we painted...



We built furniture...



We redid a kitchen...



We played music...



We made crafts...



We moved rocks...



We didn't move rocks...



We danced...



We played soccer...



We wore hats and scarves in July...



We held children.



And that's what I'll remember. Not what we built, not the tangible things we accomplished. But the relationships we built with our fellow children of God in Ecuador. The memories of saying “L.A.P. Holly” “L.A.P. Katie” Giving besitos. Scaring chickens. Accidentally offending our Ecuadorian host because of the subtleties of language. Keeping his neighbors awake while we danced to beach music on his back porch at 10:00 at night in the middle of Quito. Yelling “Hot dog dog” like it would make any

sense to anyone other than us. Standing on the roof.



Laughing...



Crying...



and everything in between...



...having a sense of community within our team and with the people of faith all around us.

And to remind of us of that community, of that shared faith, we're going to sing one more song in Spanish, and one in English.

[worship songs]

Now the Ecuadorians thought we were lucky to be able to come from North Carolina to Quito. To be able to spend \$3.00 to phone home. And we thought that they were the lucky ones, to have such faith in God, such relationships with each other, and to be so open and warm towards these silly Gringos.

And I think maybe it was because they knew the value of a five dollar bill that they had such faith. Faith in something other than money, than than possessions, than the world.

The director of the mission program, Cameron, told us some stunning statistics on our fourth day in Quito. 18% of Ecuador lives on less than a dollar a day. 20% of the world lives on less than a dollar a day. And 45% of the world lives on less than two dollars a day. If Abe Lincoln had to feed, clothe, and shelter me for a week with a little left over to save, I think I'd have faith somewhere else too.

I'm going to sing a Caedmon's Call song. It's called All I Need (Did Not Catch Her Name). The story is actually very similar to that of a woman we met in Quito. So when I think about the amazing faith in these words, I just see the faces of my brothers and sisters in Christ in Quito, of those incredible members of the community of God.

[powerpoint and song]