

## Limones, Ecuador Report The Good, the Bad and the Wonderful June 18-25



**Figure Children of Limones**

At the invitation of Neptali Chacha of Campus Crusade for Christ, Charlotte Jackson and I traveled to Limones, Ecuador to conduct training classes for the teachers of children.

Limones is an island off the coast of Ecuador inhabited by the decedents of shipwrecked slaves. Being located near the equator the weather is hot and humid even in June which is their winter. Limones is the poorest area of Ecuador with the only industry being coconuts and fishing. There are no cars on the island but many bicycles and motorcycles.

### **They Took My Peanut Butter and Gave Me a Knife**

Going through Airport Security I was scanned, patted down and they took away the peanut butter I had packed in my carry-on. (Always good to have when you don't know the food situation in a developing country.) Funny thing is that when dinner was served on the plane they gave me a fork, spoon and KNIFE!! I think I could take down a plane with a knife but how do you do it with a jar of Skippy?

### **From Quito to Limones (8000 ft to sea level)**

We met Segundo at the bus station who became an important part of the team. One reason was his physical strength which was needed to lift the heavy suitcases filled with teaching materials and also he became our body guard. Having been raised on the island and he has a heart for his people and especially for the children of Limones.

When I was told about the long bus trip to the coast I was concerned about the conditions we would face but I was pleasantly surprised that the 6 hour bus ride did not include holding a chicken in my lap. On the contrary the bus was clean and comfortable.

At one point during the trip the bus was stopped, a military guy dressed in fatigues and toting an Uzi checked everyone's ID. When he came to us we were told to get off the bus and show our Passports to another man in a kiosk. We were RACIALLY PROFILED!!! They determined we weren't terrorists or drug runners and allowed us to continue on our way.

We passed many islands on the 1 hour canoe trip to Limones and were greeted by Jackie who I would come to appreciate greatly. Despite the heat Jackie was dressed in a coat and tie and sporting a ball cap. He is quite a character



**Figure Jackie would often burst into song**

We were taken to our \$13 a night hotel and I was delighted to find a real bathroom. Not so thrilled with the resident cockroach that was big enough to throw a saddle on and something on the ceiling I had hoped was dead.

We walked to the home where we were to have most of our meals and were lead up the scariest stairs I could have imagined. Steep, narrow (particularly considering the size of my feet), some steps broken and NO HAND RAILS. Going up was bad enough but coming down was truly a test of faith.



**Figure The dreaded stairs**

We met wonderful brothers and sisters in that home where we were fed well and enjoyed great fellowship. The ladies prepared wonderful meals in a kitchen without running water.

### **First Day of Teaching**



**Figure Teacher training class**

We arrived at the little windowless church and as we set up I discovered I had left some of the most important items back at

the hotel and had no choice but to get a ride on the back of Segundo's motorcycle. Speeding through the paved and unpaved roads trying to avoid the puddles (sometimes unsuccessfully) while I, in a skirt tried to hold on to Segundo and preserve my dignity at the same time.



**Figure Neptali at the church**

Back at the church I couldn't even get a smile out of the teachers but slowly they warmed up to us as we presented ideas and materials to help them in their teaching. Most of these teachers have only been Christians for a few years but are eager to serve the Lord by touching the lives of the children in their churches.

### Day 2

Electricity had gone out which means no light and no fan in the little church.

We handed out the Life of Jesus flannel figures and assigned a lesson to each church. I am sure this is an exercise they have never attempted but all three groups were able to give a 5 minute lesson and put the figures up on the board.



**Figure Teachers with puppets**

The teachers were given puppets and shown how they can be used to capture the interest of the children in presenting the lesson. Also a variety of memory verse games were presented.



**Figure Kids Rally led by Segundo and Jackie**

One problem we encountered is the neighborhood kids being disruptive during the class. Segundo and Jackie held an impromptu rally to keep the kids occupied. Unfortunately they held it right outside the church. At one point the volume was so loud with the 150 kids that assembled we couldn't continue with the teaching for a little while.

By the time we finished with the day's teaching it was getting pretty dark inside with no lights and no windows.

### Day 3 Last Class

The groups presented their lessons again and showed much improvement. The last of the teaching was presented and with hugs and some sadness we left our new friends.



**Figure Teacher using Life of Jesus visuals**

Because of the generosity of some friends, we were able to take \$600 with which to bless the churches in Limones. The church where we met had no place for the kids so a covered area is to be built adjacent to the church where teachers can bring the Word of God to the children of Limones. Also some of the money was used to make easels for the churches.

It was a great joy to supply the teachers with materials they will use to teach the Word of God and we were asked by Neptali to return to Ecuador to teach in another region and we will be praying and looking forward to working with him again.

Blessings, *Barbara Moring*