



ECUADOR PARTNERSHIP LEARNING AND FELLOWSHIP TOUR

Focus on ministry in the rainforest

January 7 – 19, 2017

Do you feel overwhelmed by the world's problems – injustice, violence, pollution, habitat loss? Do you care about people, everywhere, even to the ends of the earth? Do you want everyone to know God's loving power? Here is your chance to step out of your usual routine and see how God is working in one of the most biodiverse regions on earth.

The Ecuador Partnership in which Central Plains is a partner with Mennonite Mission Network and the Iglesia Cristiana Menonita de Colombia has two priorities: the development of Mennonite churches in Ecuador and accompaniment of indigenous churches in their leadership development. New stages in both priorities make this an exciting time to visit. The Ecuadorian churches in Quito have now formed a conference, and Jane and Jerrell Ross Richer are living in the Ecuadorian rain forest, following César Moya and Patricia Urueña's years of indigenous ministry in the mountains.

What to Expect

Up to fourteen persons from Central Plains Mennonite Conference will join two members of the Colombia Mennonite Church for this fellowship and learning experience. CPMC participants will fly to Quito, the nation's capital, where our tour will begin and end. In Quito we will worship at the Quito Mennonite Church and learn about the context of the Mennonite churches there. Our guides in Quito will be Peter Wigginton and Delicia Bravo Aguilar, Ecuador Partnership coordinators. We will learn about the Quito church's ministries with children, teaching non-violence and self-esteem, and helping with homework, as well as their ministry with Colombia refugees, supported by Mennonite Central Committee. We will be meeting with members of the Ecuadorian Federation of Evangelical Indigenous Churches (FEINE). We'll also have time to explore this beautiful city and visit some markets.



Rainforest Experience

During our week in the rainforest, we will be guided by Jerrell and Jane Ross Richer, who with their four children live and learn from indigenous people while on assignment with Mennonite

Mission Network. They will introduce us to indigenous brothers and sisters living deep in the Amazon jungle and we will participate in some of their daily activities. We'll have a chance to interact with leaders of a native village and learn about their work to conserve their distinct customs and traditions while adapting to the changes brought by globalization.

This is an opportunity to discover some surprising similarities between traditional indigenous worldviews and the Biblical worldview. We will visit church leaders and their families and encourage them as they seek ways to worship and serve within their unique cultural contexts. You will be invited to share with students at a Bible training institute where people are being equipped to share God's story of reconciling work in their native communities.



We will do all of this while experiencing the marvel of God's creation in one of the most biodiverse regions on earth, rich in plants, birds, mammals and amphibians. You'll be inspired by stories of Christians involved in successful efforts to conserve the land that is the foundation of their native cultures. Sing and hear praises to our creator, redeemer and sustainer in new languages and deepen your understanding of the interconnectedness of God's people.

We invite you to join us on a journey of discovery in the Amazon rainforest as we take part in God's reconciling work in the world -- reconciling ourselves to God, to others, to God's creation, and to ourselves. You will be physically and spiritually challenged in up-close encounters, learning about issues you care deeply about – Christian faith, indigenous culture, social justice, creation care.

Arrangements

Cost: Approximately \$950, plus airfare. This includes lodging, meals and guides, transportation by bus and motorized canoe. Participants are responsible for spending money and for roundtrip airfare between the US and Quito, to be arranged by Menno Travel in Goshen for coordinated arrivals. (Airlines will likely range from \$700 - \$1,000 depending on departure city.)

Lodging: We will be sleeping at hotels and lodges equipped for international travelers. During our time in an indigenous village, we will stay at a rustic lodge with running water and showers, but electricity will only be available in the evenings. We will spend several days camping along a secluded river in the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve with a team of native guides. During this time, we'll trade creature comforts for the opportunity to see some new creatures – like Amazon river turtles and Woolly monkeys! At the beginning and end of our adventure we will be staying at hotels equipped with Wi-Fi. As we travel deeper into the rainforest, however, internet access will be limited or nonexistent. This will give us a break from technology and an opportunity to focus entirely on the sights, sounds and people we meet.

Health: Participants should be in reasonable physical health. You should be capable of walking one mile on a trail and sleeping several nights in a tent on a sleeping mat.

Contact: For further information and to confirm your participation, contact Joetta Schlabach, jschlabach@faithmennonite.org, 651-290-2185.