

Dear partners in reaching the Salasaka people,

We're on the countdown to Saturday, March 24 when the New Testament dedication will be held. The Lord has been answering many of your prayers since we arrived in Ecuador on March 1st. The Salasaka believers are stepping forward to lend their support and take more ownership of the event.

On Thursday afternoon, March 8 we were part of a four-hour planning meeting. In addition to the two of us, seven Salasaka believers and a current leader in the local church who is from another province participated. Discussions went well, the tone was mutually encouraging, many plans were sketched out. The next step is to execute those plans, tweak them where needed, and motivate more folks to volunteer in an area where they're gifted.

A big part of our own responsibility is promotion / publicity. We've arranged for Shedd plus a Salasaka believer to have two upcoming radio interviews: Monday, March 12 at 6 PM with Radio Amor in Ambato (the nearby city which is also the provincial capital) and March 13 - 14 with HCJB in Quito (about 4 hours from here on bus). A few Salasakans have agreed to record a 30-second segment about the dedication event and deliver it to another radio station in Ambato where we hope it will be broadcast in the days leading up to the event. The plan is also to have broadcasts done over the neighborhood loud speakers which are primarily used for calling people to meetings / "mingas" (community work projects) and for announcing a community member's death.

- Pray that these interviews and recordings would be well done and be broadcast at times when many Salasaka people would hear them.



Kris consulted with a couple of Salasaka women to prepare an attractive piece which will be printed into "hojas volantes" (quarter-page handouts); she had just enough copies of the New Testament to stack them into the form of a cross. Larry Salay will arrive in Quito on March 17 with "afiches" (printed posters) for displaying in store windows; he's designing them in Waxhaw NC with good photos taken in Salasaka. Shedd has been updating the Facebook page on a somewhat regular basis, depending on getting hooked up to WiFi (still a challenge!).

- Pray that these promotional materials will be perceived as attractive / inviting and that many Salasaka people who are not part of the church will become curious about the event and feel welcome to attend it.

Tomorrow (3/12) our focus will be to invite governing leaders from Salasaka to an event we're hosting on Friday, March 23. Dr. Manuel Caizabanda, the mayor of Pelileo (the nearby market town), hosted us in his office on Tuesday March 6. It was helpful to be able to report to the church members two days later that he is available to attend the March 23 event. We are hoping that many of the leaders who attend on that Friday will also attend the Saturday dedication program.

- Pray that we can be in touch with the key leaders whom we wish to invite to the pre-dedication event and that they will get interested in purchasing a New Testament for themselves. We know that God's word will produce hope and new life in their hearts.

We are excited that many guests will be joining us on March 24th. Larry and Susan's two children will be here with them. Our son David chose not to come because he remembers feeling sick at this high altitude. Mike has a ticket for March 21-27. Anne, her pilot husband Jer, and their three children hope to fly stand-by on March 23. Twenty people from the U.S. who have partnered with us or with Wycliffe or who are representing a partner church will be with us plus a youth group of about fifteen supervised by Ivan and Rachel Peñafiel. (She was one of David's tutors in Shell.) There will be almost ten mission leaders and pastors coming from Quito and Colombia and over thirty missionary friends coming from Quito, Shell, Patate, Riobamba, and Macas. With almost two weeks to go, the number of non-Kichwa-speaking guests could swell to over 100. As to Kichwa speakers we will only know that day as the busloads start to show up from this and other provinces.

- Pray that the sheer quantity of outsiders who arrive in Salasaka on March 24 will stir the curiosity of the non-churched population. We would like this to be a celebration when the word of God is held in high esteem and many Salasakas begin to take steps closer to God, to His Word, and to true peace and joy.

Personally, we feel the Lord empowering us, and we see many instances of His provision. For this, we are truly grateful. As you can imagine our days are more than full. At times our minds don't easily shut off at night or they jump into gear too early in the morning resulting in less than ideal sleep. During animated conversation between Salasakas when two or more people are talking rapidly at the same time, it's easy for us to lose not only the details of what's being said but sometimes even the gist, especially when we are tired.

- Pray for adequate rest, for ability to release the things over which we have no control, for good / clear communication as we switch between English, Spanish and Kichwa, and for continued opportunities to befriend the downtrodden and the proud, those who are hurting, and those who haven't experienced the abundant life which Jesus gives to His followers.

We consider it an honor and a privilege that you are partners in this work. We may not see obvious results while we're on earth, but we know that God's purposes prevail and that each of you who has been obedient to Him will receive a lasting reward in eternity for your faithfulness. Some Salasaka people, because of our prayers and yours and (very soon) the printed New Testament in their heart language, will receive new birth and encouragement for their faith walk.

Shedd and Kris