



STATE OF THE EASONS ADDRESS (APRIL–JUNE 2015)

When we came to Ecuador in February of last year, it was to assist in the administration of the Montañita Verde Children’s Home. 2014 had more than its fair share of challenges, but one thing that we never lacked was a clear goal. Life is easier when you know where you’re headed – when you can make a plan and then pursue it to completion. Last December, when it became clear that the goals, plans, challenges, and everything that went with them were about to collapse, we were left wondering, “Where do we go from here?” We began to pray and seek out the answer to that question, but if we’re allowed to be completely honest, we were feeling pretty banged up both emotionally and spiritually. Prayer wasn’t something that came very easily or consistently at that point unless it was in reference to the immediate circumstances that were surrounding us and our desire for God to fix them (or perhaps to fix us). We’d love to say that we were “counting it all joy,” as the book of James tells us to do “when we encounter various trials,” but that wasn’t typically the case. We felt defeated, and we definitely weren’t feeling joyous.

We continued to talk to one another about the future and to pray. In late January, we were at a point where we felt

like God had given us a rough direction in which to start moving and we began to put together a new ministry. We began dropping hints in our newsletters and on social media that we would be announcing the project soon. We spent hours in thought and conversation, sent dozens of emails, made a lot of phone calls, and held numerous meetings with the heads of our organization, our pastor, government agencies, and the directors of other non-profits. We commissioned a very talented friend to put together shiny new logo for us. We took all of this information, and prepared a proposal for a new ministry called “Bonsai.”



We had hoped and planned to announce Bonsai by the end of April. We had a finished proposal and all of the parties

involved were excited to begin. It was about that time that we began to ask ourselves, “Is this really what God is leading us to do? Is this something that we made up just because it made sense and we want a purpose – a clear goal to move toward?” Fear and doubt have a way of taking something that God has clearly revealed to you and making you second guess until you decide that you were really hearing your own voice instead of His. So, for a few months, we wrestled with Bonsai, neither able to move forward with it, nor able to forget about it.

In the meantime, we’ve continued to work with the families of the children who lived at Montañita Verde, because we know that God has placed them in our lives for a reason and because we are able to help meet their needs. We’ve continued to visit to each family. We’ve made sure that the children are being cared for, and in the process, their parents have opened up to us and allowed us to speak to them about Jesus and to pray with them. We’ve been able to provide food, medicine, and resources for some of these families in emergency situations and have coordinated with local organizations to provide additional financial relief. We’ve connected them with our church and they are now receiving aid from the church and attending there. These families have connected us with other families so that we can develop relationships with them as well, hopefully opening the door for us to be able to share the Gospel. We served as foster parents for one of the children for two months when it became apparent that he was being abused. We’ve fought for legal protection through the court system for several of the children. We have become involved with

Shekinah, the only remaining children’s home in Manta, and are now volunteering there once a week. We’ve become more involved with our church. Will is currently playing the drums on Sunday mornings and we’ve started getting involved with the youth group.



With the help of You & Us, a local non-profit organization for which Will serves as a board member, we were able to help the Cherne family, as well as 15 other children, purchase school uniforms and supplies.

We know that God wants us to trust Him at all times, but we also know that He is sovereign, and that He can even use our moments of weakness and our failures for His glory and to bring about good. We feel that He’s done that with Bonsai. There are a lot of differences between the ministry blueprint that we had ready back in April and what we’ve finally ended up with. It’s simpler. It’s more direct in its focus, which we believe will allow us to direct our energy more intensely on the specific needs that we’re aiming to meet. We’re a lot more certain that this is the path that we’re supposed to take, and we feel a lot more prepared to take it.

Bonsai, in its current form and the one with which we will be moving forward, is an after-school program for children of at-risk families that we will be opening soon in Manta. It aims to provide a safe place

for children where they will be fed, cared for, and helped with their schoolwork. It will provide a resource to parents to allow them greater freedom to work and provide for their families. It will give us a way to build relationships and share our hope in Jesus Christ with them. You can read more about the project at <http://incalink.org/ministries/bonsai/>.

Please pray for us as we begin this new phase of our journey in earnest, and as we raise funds, flesh out the details of the ministry, hire staff, and interview families. Please consider giving financially toward the project to help us begin as quickly as possible. Information on how to contribute can be found on the website above.



We were able to host a group of Inca Link interns in Manta in late May as part of the "Amazing Race". This group served with various Inca Link ministries throughout Ecuador, Peru, and Columbia.

Additional News/Prayer Needs:

- 1) Emery has started pre-school. He **loves** it, and has made a lot of new friends (with whom he speaks Spanish fluently). He will be one of five students from his school starring in a performance at the local university in August.
- 2) Amanda's mom and brother visited with us for a week in early June. It

was really great to have family here with us.

- 3) We're about to start receiving our summer teams. Because we're in a transitional period in ministry, the logistical aspect of housing and transporting people is more of a challenge. Pray that our time with these teams is fruitful.
- 4) As Inca Link missionaries, we are 100% donor supported. We've moved into the city of Manta, put Emery in school, had a much smaller number of one-time yearly donations than we received last year, and been informed that a couple of monthly donors that will not be able to continue supporting us. Our expenses have increased as the amount of donations have decreased. We are in need of additional support (especially monthly support, which gives us greater stability in budget planning). Raising funds is by far the least fun part of missions, but we can't continue without it. Please prayerfully consider giving if and as you are able, and contact us if you are interested in supporting us in this way.

Thank you all for your continued prayers, words of encouragement, and financial support for our family.

