

Our Grandchildren are Tying Their Own Shoes  
By Steve Saint  
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I got a text message from a friend, which read, "Your grandchildren just tied their shoes" (in Sierra Leone). That is all it said. But that was enough to make my heart sing. I knew what Charlie meant.

A few days ago I was in a room full of people speaking Shuar, Spanish, Wao Tededo, English, and a little Quechua. We represented six distinct cultures from four countries - brought together by one purpose, preparing to more effectively carry out Christ's commission to all of us.

Looking out the window of Camp Mangayacu on the edge of the Ecuadorian Amazon Jungle, I could see a snow capped Andean peak to the Southwest, steep forested ridges from there around to the Southeast and the vibrant emerald green of the vast Amazon stretching from our doorsteps to the Atlantic Ocean to the East.

We were at Camp Mangayacu to train frontier people in skills that open doors and multiply Christian ministry efforts.

Careful now; when I say "we" were there to train "frontier people," you probably picture North Americans teaching South Americans how to fix teeth, check eyes, prescribe glasses for visually handicapped people, give physical exams, and teach jungle Indians how to repair and maintain outboard motors, chainsaws, and generators.

That is partially true. Tom and Carla Dowling from Wisconsin were taking Rolando from Rio Verde (Green River) through course 2 of the Itec dental training program (Ident). But Rolando was helping Tom teach nineteen-year-old Paul, the son of missionaries to Puerto Napo, what Rolando had learned in Ident level 1.

Rolando was Denis Scharine's "Ident son". Dennis taught him Ident level 1. Tom adopted Rolando and took him to level 2. Rolando helped "Papa" Tom take Paul to level 1, making Paul, Rolando's "Ident son," and Dennis' and Tom's "Ident Grandson".

In another part of the Mangayacu primary facility, Dr. Evan Bensler, Itec's full-time medical doctor and non-verbal video guru was teaching 8 Imed students physical anatomy, how to do a physical exam, the different types of medicine delivery (oral, topical and injectable), and how to diagnose and treat basic medical problems prevalent in the jungles where his students and their people live.

Evan has some great video teaching aids. One piece of video shows a man eating a carrot. While he is eating, the man morphs into a 2-D Animated figure so you can see him swallowing the carrot. As the orange carrot leaves the stomach and starts its passage through the intestines it begins to darken. Tiny orange particles

pass through the intestinal wall into the bloodstream, which you can then watch as it carries them to all the different parts of the body. In about one minute of video, anyone watching can understand how the digestive system and the circulatory system work together to distribute nutrients and medicine to the entire body.

That is critical information. If you didn't know how these basic body systems worked and you had a bad infection in your little finger that was supposed to be fixed by swallowing a little pill that a foreign doctor gave you - wouldn't you wonder how something you swallowed, and would pass later in the day, could possibly fix the infection way out in your little finger? Not if you watched Evan's little video!

But Evan ("Doc", as we call him) didn't make the video on his own. Itec has a very capable artist, graphic designer, and video animator who works with Evan to produce these incredibly efficient non-verbal training videos. Peter, this media guru who works with Itec, was actually there at Mangayacu teaching media and graphics to a mixed group of students, including Mark, Paul's father, the U.S. missionary to Puerto Napo.

Wonder why I point out that one of Peter's students is a "Gringo" missionary? It's because Peter is really Pedro Huancollo, a native of the city of Arequipa, in the southern desert mountains of Peru. Pedro was teaching a course on how to use visual media to draw people to Christ and to the churches represented by a number of his students, where they can be disciplined.

We had North Americans teaching South Americans, and South Americans teaching North Americans. Rob, a Southwest Airlines captain, was helping our Ecuadorian airplane-building crew wire the latest plane they have built. Most of the planes this Ecuadorian crew have built are being used here in the U.S. They not only "build", but this great Ecuadorian team under the leadership of Galo Ortiz, one of Itec's former students, teaches the North American pilot-owners how to build these planes.

This might seem rather confusing in a culture where the common belief is that "Missions is from the West to the Rest". Just think of Missions as a big family. Parents teach children, who grow up to take responsibility and authority over their own affairs and then begin to teach and help their parents and grandparents.

I saw God's family functioning down in Ecuador, and it not only gave me a sense of satisfaction - I know it pleased my Father. Good stuff, Pedro, Evan, Steve B., Stephenie, Octavio, Tagaca, Tom and Carla, Paul, Rolando, Ed, Tom, Steve and Pat, Jane and Laura, Don, Marco, América, Enrique, Charles, Jeff, Rob and Teena, Carmelo and María..... AND, thank you all who make it possible for us to do what we do by giving to Itec. You were there in Ecuador every bit as much as we were.

Steve Saint