



“DIG A HOLE IN FAITH...”

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*Work group at the Las Moras reservoir, Nov. 9, 2006.
Pascual Sopalo of our “Free a Family” family is kneeling in the center.*

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Ecuador. It's time again to send a few lines of thoughts your way. We keep well and busy. We have six partner organizations here in Ecuador now, and we're glad for the help of our “team” of gifted young people with lots of enthusiasm and a calling to help others. It's good to see communities getting a vision of what they can become with God's help. Here is an example:

Some of you may remember the Sopalo family that we wrote about for four years in the “Free a Family” newsletters. Their community of Larcachaca is quite extensive and is divided into districts. One of these is “Las Moras” (the Blackberries) which lies some three quarters of an hour's walk from the center of the community, just off the gravel road leading over the mountains to Oyacachi, a tourist attraction on the descent into the jungle region of Ecuador.

Las Moras is at 3,400 meters altitude and has a typical mountain climate, wet winters and long, dry, windy summers that last from May to September. This long dry spell severely restricts the agricultural production that the community depends on for its livelihood. Last January some members of the Larcachaca church decided to do something about the problem.

They organized a group from the community and started to dig a reservoir. They had no promise whatsoever of funding for the project but they had faith, a vision, and a will to work. So they dug away with hoes and spades, used the stones they dug out to level the top of the wall and later to line the floor, and produced a fine piece of civil

engineering: a reservoir measuring 22 x 22 meters and four meters deep.

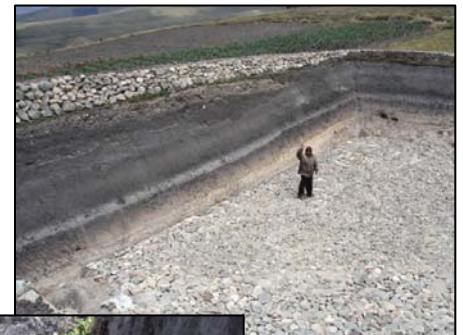
One of the church members and leader of the enterprise is Juan José Sopalo (a common surname in the community). He visited the CRWRC office last July and told us about the project, so we went up there to take a look and were really impressed by what we saw. It so happened that we had recently been able to reclaim the value added tax from last year's Cuarto Lote water project, and found it was just enough to buy the 300 meters of 8-inch pvc pipe needed to connect the reservoir to the main irrigation canal.

The community already makes use of the main irrigation canal, but only has rights to it for two days a week. So the creation of the reservoir will give a more constant supply of water. And, the plan is to further improve the water situation by installing a sprinkler system, a much more efficient and economical irrigation system than ditch irrigation. Our partner organization AIEP (Association of Evangelical Indigenous people of Pichincha), which administers Agriculture, Income Generation, and Adult Education programs in the region, is cooperating in the project. The reservoir is now ready for lining with cement.

We are reminded of Hebrews 11, a record of what God's people were able to accomplish “by faith.” It gives us great satisfaction to work with such a united community, helping them to achieve their goals. We have faith, too, that this project will be completed and their standard of living improved as a result.

We look forward to seeing you in the spring when we come to the U.S. on deputation, God willing. In the meantime, best wishes for Christmas and may 2007 bring much blessing your way.

Rob and Betty



(above) Juan José Sopalo, one of the main organizers of the project.



(left) The outlet tunnel. The pipes and valves have since been installed.



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