



## Praises!

- Safety on Colombia trip
- 10 people saved
- Ready for visa application

## Prayer Requests

- Visas to be approved
- Peace in Colombia
- Move to Colombia in August

## Colombia Trip Report

Thank you so much to everyone who prayed for my trip to Colombia to work out details about our move down. I just returned to the States yesterday. Although Colombia has been in the midst of political protests and violence for the last month, God blessed the trip in a mighty way for His glory. God brought a team of six people together to visit the city of Pasto, Nariño, with me (a Mexican missionary who works in Bogota, a missionary from Medellin, two Colombian young men training for the ministry, and a man originally from the area near Pasto). They were a tremendous help in showing us Pasto, and details are coming together nicely for our move. I was able to be in four different cities in Colombia during the trip. As a team, we were able to distribute hundreds of tracts and speak with many people about the Gospel. As best as we know, at least ten people trusted Christ as Savior. Please pray for their discipleship and growth in the Lord. In Bogota, I had the privilege of seeing five people baptized by Pastor Jaime the first Sunday there.



God is at work in Colombia and the harvest is ripe. We are excited to soon be a part of God's plan there. Praise the Lord, I was able to get our official notarized letter of invitation to Colombia, so we can get our religious worker visas.

## Protests and “Paros”

“Paros” is a Spanish term for stops. Protesters across Colombia are creating roadblocks to prevent movement of cars, buses, and supplies. Sometimes, they turn violent. We were stopped seven times during my time in Colombia. God used them in a mighty way.

Our first stop came near Pasto. We were traveling to witness to the family of our team member. Indigenous people had the road blocked and were walking around with large rods preventing anyone from leaving or moving their cars. Thankfully, we were only detained a couple of hours. We had tracts with us and took the time to walk up and down the line of cars handing out gospel tracts. Almost everyone for about a mile long line of cars accepted them. They had nothing else to do but read them. The protesters, although menacing-looking with their rods, didn’t stop us. Praise the Lord, some people allowed us to talk with them about Christ.



Our final “Paro” was the most violent. We were coming back into Pasto late Wednesday after being detained for four hours at another stop. As we neared the center of town, the road was littered with broken bricks and stones, and a mob had formed blocking the road and they were setting tires on fire directly in front of us. We turned around quickly to try to leave the area but another mob had now blocked the road behind us and were littering the street with bricks and setting tires on fire. Both sides of the street had medians we couldn’t get over. Thankfully, there was one final side street they hadn’t yet blocked. The mob was throwing stones at our car as we took the side street. Thankfully, nothing hit us, and we were able to leave the scene untouched. Thank you again to all who prayed for this trip. God protected in every situation.

## Thou Preparest a Table Before Me in the Presence of Mine Enemies

Wednesday morning, we had gone to Lake Cocha (about an hour outside of Pasto) and were stopped three times along the way. We were with the only independent Baptist pastor in Pasto. He spoke with the people at each one, and they were kind to let us pass. The final one only allowed us to pass on foot. As we came back from the lake on Wednesday afternoon, we were stopped by another group. The crowd laughed at the pastor when he mentioned he needed to get back to preach for his church. They assured him they were religious too and wouldn’t allow us to pass. He suggested if they wouldn’t allow him to get to his church he ought preach there. God worked and the leaders of the protest allowed us to preach. About 100 indigenous people listed to us as the Mexican missionary, the missionary from Medellin, the pastor from Pasto, and I preached in turn. While they listened, the others of our team handed out gospel tracts to almost everyone there. It was an incredible opportunity for each of us to preach the Gospel. Miguel preached about the “unknown God” from Acts 17. I couldn’t help but marvel at how God had allowed them to stop everyone to hear the Gospel.

God brought the words “if thy enemy hunger, feed him” to mind. We asked if we could go back down to the lake to get them bread, and they gave us permission. We bought enough bread for 100 people and brought it back to them. They had a large pot over a fire and were bringing five gallon buckets of water from the stream to fill the pot. They had buckets of potatoes and began

boiling them. They set up another fire and filled a pot with water to make a sugar-cane drink called “Aguapanela.”

When it was ready, they invited us to eat with them. As I stood in the midst of the crowd eating boiled potatoes and drinking sugar-cane water, God brought the words of Psalm 23:5 to mind “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” These people aren’t my enemies, but rather, people for whom Christ died. May many be saved, and may we soon be able to come back and start a church in their town.

### First-fruits

Saturday, the church in Bogota went out for evangelization in the town square. We spent a couple of hours distributing tracts and speaking with folks sitting there who allowed us. A husband and wife let me share the Gospel with them. Praise the Lord that they accepted Christ as Savior. Please pray that they go to the church there in Bogota and that they will be discipled. These are the first fruits; the first Colombians we have had the privilege of leading to Christ. May it be the beginning of many more!

### Prayer Requests

Once again, thank you so much for praying for this trip. Prayer was vital for our safety and for God’s work. Near the pastor’s house in Bogotá, three buses were burned while we were in Pasto. The station had all the glass broken out of the windows, and the entrances were burned. Praise the Lord, God kept his wife and family safe while we were away.

•In the next few months, please pray for the peace of Colombia. Pray for the safety of believers. Pray for the work of churches to continue and people to be saved.

•Our move date is now the end of August. Lord willing this summer, I will be taking safety and security training courses for missionaries. This should be a tremendous help as we navigate and mitigate the challenges we may face in Colombia.

- Please pray for our visas. Lord willing, I will be applying for them this week.

Thank you all so much for your prayers and financial support! We are so grateful for all of you!

Your servant to Colombia,  
Matt for the Smith Family

