

Dear friends

I was recently at the Methodist Synod and Paul Dunstan our District Evangelism Enabler was talking about the origins of Methodism. He reminded us that our tradition began as a movement under the leadership of John Wesley and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and through it lives were changed and transformed. These early followers of John Wesley were often ridiculed for their fervour and methodical ways and one of those insults was the word 'Methodists' which eventually stuck and became the name of our church. It referred to the structure and organisation central to the Wesleyan movement. Another insult that was thrown at the founders of our church was 'enthusiasts' because of the fervour and commitment. How I wish we had taken that as our name and become 'the enthusiastic church'!

Of course in our church we need the 'method' we need structure and guidelines. Yet this should never be at the expense of enthusiasm, that sense of faith being living and vibrant. The word enthusiasm actually originated from a Greek word meaning God in us. If we recognise God in our lives, and the difference he makes through his transforming love and grace, then enthusiasm should be a natural response.

I hope we can be enthusiastic about our faith because enthusiasm is catching. I doubt if many people are drawn to God through our 'methods' important as they are. Yet if we demonstrate enthusiasm, if we show people that God is in us, who knows how others might be drawn to him?

Love and peace

Andrew  
(who would have loved to be a minister in the Enthusiastic Church).



## **Catherine Porter writes of her experiences with God in Ecuador:**

I'd like to share with you my own personal experiences of God through my gap year. I spent 6 months in Ecuador in S America volunteering. My first 3 months were spent in the Amazon Rainforest on a conversation project. I then returned to the capital Quito to work in a day centre for children in a very poor neighbourhood.

When I left England for Ecuador I wanted with all my heart to be following God's will. I hadn't felt any particular calling to go to Ecuador but the project and country matched all my academic passions for Biology and Spanish and I was eager to grow and deepen my relationship with God through a challenging experience. I was desperately praying beforehand that if it wasn't God's will I didn't want to be part of it. I had read that "What he opens, no one can close and what he closes, no one can open" in the Bible and believed that if God didn't want me to go to Ecuador he would close the door. I was so reassured therefore that when I got my visa to go to Ecuador through God's help because it was if he was saying, "yes, I want you to go".

Close to my departure, God built me up so that I could step out in faith. On the day before I went, God spoke to me through my bible notes saying, "God knows our needs and, if as our loving Father, he calls us to courage, obedience and steps of faith, he also promises to be with us all the way". By this point I was surprisingly unafraid; in fact, I couldn't wait for all the blessings I felt God had promised as I stepped out in obedience. Finally, before I left, I began to worry that without a Church to support me, I might lose my faith abroad. I prayed that God would provide a fellow Christian particularly for my rainforest project.