

August 14-20, 2025 APA Missionary Bishops Visit to the Indigenous Pastoral Anglican Province of America in Ecuador (IPAPAE)

Summary

Bishop David Haines along with Fr. Paul Rivard and Matt McBurney (Worthy Endeavors) travelled to the Chimborazo region of Ecuador to visit with APA Global Partner churches. The team found clergy, congregations and communities to be of high morale and in a healthy state with a ministry expanding outside of the Chimborazo region both from economic factors causing immigration to city centers as well as from surrounding provinces beginning to request ministry outreach.

Thursday August 14, 2025 – Journey to Ecuador

After Bp. Haines and Fr. Rivard met in Atlanta on Thursday afternoon, they boarded the four-and-a-half-hour flight to Quito where just a one-hour difference had them arriving at around 8:30 PM Ecuadorian time. Finding Matthew McBurney (translator and representative of Worthy Endeavors/Samaritan's Purse) already arrived at the hotel, the trio met for dinner and began discussing plans for the coming days before turning in for the night. It was becoming evident that using the same airline and the same hotel for these trips was causing the often-overbearing process of travel arrangements and accommodation to play an ever-decreasing role.

Friday August 15, 2025 – Journey to Chimborazo Region and Meeting with Clergy

Friday's primary objectives were to travel from Quito to Riobamba in the Chimborazo region, to get settled at the hotel there, and to begin meeting with clergy. With a healthy breakfast taken in, the team took the shuttle to the airport to pick up the rental car and begin travel south through Quito and along the Panamerican South highway, solemnly nicknamed the "Avenue of Volcanoes." A special "helado" ice cream ritual was the only stop before arrival several hours later at the hotel in Riobamba where Fr. Carlos Ayol along with his wife Elsa and their daughter Karen accompanied Fr. Gustavo Mendez and Dcn. Walter Coro for greetings and a special dinner of fellowship and reacquaintance. Later that evening, Fr. Luis Tuaza and his wife Fannie arrived for a short time of greeting and conversation. Before departing, arrangements were made for Fr. Luis and Matthew to take a special journey the next morning to visit the construction site of an agricultural project which would make potable water easier to acquire for Kichwa farmers in a nearby community. With greetings and plans completed, the evening ended and all retired to rest for the very full days to come.

Saturday, August 16 – Clergy Meeting at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, Visits to The Church of Saints Philip and James in Chismaute Alto and the New Life in God Church in San Miguel de Pumachaca

Saturday began with a one-and-a-half-hour drive to the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Guamote where a synod and clergy conference commenced with the great excitement of priests

and deacons thrilled to see their beloved Bishop Haines finally arrived. The Kichwa clergy, who are commensurate speech makers, showered their guests with lengthy speeches praising the healthy state of the churches in Chimborazo and the episcopal leadership which had led to this time of peace and expansion in the community.

With nearly all of the sixteen clergy in attendance along with some of their wives and the president of the pastorate also seated, the meeting commenced. A variety of bothersome pastoral issues from within the communities had been satisfactorily resolved over the past year and the team of clergy were enjoying more of a team spirit than they had experienced before. Leaders of the group reported that word of the healthy state of the IPAPAE had reached communities outside of Chimborazo and that requests had begun to come in for clergymen to offer their ministry service to at least three regions beyond the officially registered communities. The continued need for increased administrative order was mentioned by Fr. Pedro Lema and Fr. Luis Guaman as pastoral responsibility for the churches continues to expand. The request for instruction and assistance in this regard was met by a prepared presentation of Bishop Haines concerning the canonical requirements for ordained ministers. The clergy expressed gratefulness to have the instruction and time for questions and comments followed. It was reiterated by some clergy that a greater understanding of canon law would be helpful and in response Fr. Gustavo volunteered to take on the task of translating the APA Canons and Constitution into Spanish, a task which he jovially insisted would be “easy.” No mention was made of the project being “fun.”

The meeting then included a time where clergy were invited to describe some of their experiences ministering in the variety of communities where they had been serving. Dcn. David Daquilema, one of the newer ordinands, expressed his great and heartfelt desire to teach the youth of the community where he served and therefore his disappointment to find that the children were absent on two recent occasions when the catechism course was offered in the early hours before Sunday worship. Later discussion involved Bp. David, Fr. Paul and another deacon lending pastoral advice to solve the problem by perhaps offering the course at a later time in the day, or by perhaps using the most commonly successful tactic for extracurricular adolescent church attendance – cookies. Regardless, Dcn. David’s deeply earnest expression of desire to teach the next generation of Kichwa people about the majesty of Christ and likewise his emotional pain of finding resistance to his initial efforts was emblematic of the eager spirit of these new clergy. While the setting of the Kichwa community in the high Andes of Chimborazo Ecuador is vastly different from that of the United States, Dcn. David’s experience working with parishioners would no doubt elicit sympathy from any clergyman who has tried at doing ministry and not found easy success.

Bp. Haines and Fr. Rivard afterward made a gift of several Anglican style clergy shirts and collars which had been requested. While the sizes were not always right, the clericals were received with joy since these (Anglican “dog collars” and matching shirts) are not available in Ecuador. Eager to distinguish themselves from the Roman Catholic Church which has at times treated the Kichwa poorly in the Chimborazo region, the new vestments were received as a new

sign to the surrounding society that the ministry of the Anglican Church was in full effect. Another gift of two cassocks with red piping were given to clergy with title, a gift received with great thanksgiving by both Fr. Carlos Ayol (Canon to the Cathedral) and Fr. Luis Tuaza (Vicar General). Dcn. Walter Coro, the youngest of the deacons, received an Anglican style cassock and cincture which had also been brought along as a gift to whomever it would fit. The final gift was a new golden chalice and paten given to the Cathedral and received by “Tayta” Nico Tambo, a long time Deacon charged with care of the Cathedral facility. With the meetings concluded, attendees enjoyed a tasty lunch prepared by Elsa Ayol and some of the other ladies in the church. By this time, Fr. Luis and Matt had returned from the agricultural project site and the team loaded up to make the trip to the community of Chismaute Alto and the Church of Sts. Philip and James.

The team arrived at Chismaute Alto and was met with a surprising scene as a festival (and rodeo) of Sts. Philip and James was already underway. Initially, the visit was planned to be simply a meeting with church members but it was quickly transformed into an impromptu Mass using whatever vestments and materials could be scraped together. And yes, there was a rodeo going on simultaneously. The best cowboys of the region had gathered with their steeds to display their prowess at roping steer and other rodeo skills, an annual Chismaute Alto tradition now often coinciding with the annual visit of Bp. Haines. Just thirty feet away from the makeshift rodeo arena and the loud amplified shouts of trilling announcers were the front doors of the church. Nevertheless, the chaos of the activity was quickly transformed into a Holy Mass within the chapel, a service of worship attended by easily a hundred faithful – a few of whom were decked out fully in chaps and cowboy hats. This particular church, famous for members pressing forward to receive a blessing from the bishop, did not fail to insist on being touched by the hand of Christ’s man visiting here *in persona Christi*. The rodeo continued throughout the liturgy but the volume of the rodeo callers was intentionally decreased as instinctively, the crowds would acknowledge that a sacred event was taking place. The service concluded, and after yet another meal, the team proceeded on to the community of San Miguel de Pumachaca.

The New Life of God Anglican Church in San Miguel de Pumachaca has become famous over the years for the fortitude of the people there who were turned out of the Roman Catholic Church building where they had been meeting. Faced with this eviction over ten years ago, the community was unwilling to accept defeat and decided to build a church of their own, inspired by the faithfulness of a single elderly woman who volunteered the contribution of her wooden spoon, the only tool she possessed for making her living and preparing meals for her family. Immediately others began to contribute bricks, wheelbarrows of cement, and other construction supplies until there was enough to begin work. A few years later the New Life in God Anglican Church in San Miguel de Pumachaca stood bright and new, capable of holding at least two hundred and fifty faithful.

At this service of worship and during Bp. Haines’ address where he reminded the congregation of this story, a small commotion was heard in the congregation as it was discovered

that Rosario, the “wooden spoon woman,” was present in the room. Bp Haines, understanding what was happening, interrupted his address and came down from the pulpit to embrace her, her family, and the other older members present who were a part of that early effort. Returning to the pulpit, obviously emotionally touched by the moment, Bp. Haines concluded the address and the meeting’s end was blessed with yet another meal. The day’s events now over, the team returned to the hotel to rest before the following days activity.

Sunday, August 17, 2025 – Cathedral Mass, Confirmations at St. Peter at the Mount of Olives Church, Columbe Grande and New Life Church in Christ Jesus, Riobamba

The morning began with a journey from the hotel to the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Guamate where awaiting the team was a growing number of brightly dressed Kichwa women and men whose red, green, pink, and other multicolored traditional woolen garb were illuminated by the bright sunshine of a clear and cheery day. With a great number of the clergy present and vested the service eventually commenced with a procession and continued with a concelebrated Mass officiated in Kichwa, Spanish, and English as the liturgy was shared between Fr. Luis and Bp. Haines. The Mass was a glorious testament to the progress that has been made in the last decade here in the Anglican Church in the Chimborazo region. A large cathedral, a host of ordained men, and a congregation of more than a hundred participated together in the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ as not one or two, but seven choirs all took their turn praising God with their characteristic high voices, rhythmic swaying, and uniform traditional dress. With the service completed, a seemingly endless list of requests for the Bishop to bless all manner of things commenced. Blessings included church members (elderly, infirm, and infant), choirs, medicines, vehicles, foods, flags, rosaries and most things people could think to find and present for blessing. After a brief luncheon offered to special guests and prepared once again by Elsa and served by Fr. Carlos and others, the party loaded up to travel to the church at Columbe Grande where those ready for confirmation were already waiting.

Upon arrival at the Church of St. Peter on the Mount of Olives, Columbe Grande, the congregation where Fr. Gustavo Mendes has been teaching confirmation classes, the team was met with another great host of the faithful expecting special guests. Within a few brief moments the service was coming together and a procession of clergy were collected outside and readied to walk through the nave to the altar. This liturgy was again a concelebration with languages alternating from English to Spanish as Fr. Gustavo and Bp. Haines worked through consecration and administration of the sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Confirmation.

When the time came for the confirmed to kneel before the Bishop, it was discovered with surprise by the visiting clergy that four women in a row each bore the name Maria. Later in the trip, even more of the Kichwa women were discovered to bear the name of Our Lady. Perhaps it was striking only to the visitors, but the perpetually evident humility, maternal carefulness, gentle manner, unassuming nature and sacred disposition of so many of the Kichwa women

made it seem particularly appropriate that Mary should be the name by which so many of them called.

Later in the service and before a final blessing and dismissal, Fr. Gustavo revealed a plan concocted by he and Fr. Rivard months before in which messages would be passed back and forth between the youth of each of their churches. In response to a message of greeting from the youth of St. George the Martyr Church, young members of St. Peter's were handed markers and pencil crayons and encouraged to write notes in Spanish and Kichwa to send back to the United States. More than twenty notes were gathered to be returned and translated for the new pen pals. Following, you guessed it, another gloriously prepared meal handed out by kitchen workers bursting with joy over the abundance of food, the team loaded up and headed to Riobamba for the final liturgy of the day and of the entire visit to Ecuador.

In the more urban setting of Riobamba, evidence of the shifting dynamics of the Kichwa community was evident since the meeting was taking place in a storefront populated by seventy faithful who, pursuing economic opportunities, had moved from the remote communities to the city. Fr. Luis was already halfway through the liturgy and had begun preaching when the team arrived.

Fr. Luis is an exceptional preacher and one of the original priests requesting a partnership with the Anglican Province of America over a decade ago. He was raised in the Kichwa community under Roman Catholicism and so excelled in religious training that he rose to the top of his seminary class in Cuenca. Now, both a priest and a university professor, Fr. Luis brings a kind of fervent and compelling character to his ministry that is hardly matched. Confirmants listened attentively in the front row and with rapt attention, young and old appeared to discern that the words of the gospel being preached were as serious as a heart attack, and yet as beamingly joyful as the eternal victory of Christ over sin, death, and hell. Roughly translated, Fr. Luis exhorted the packed room that "whether in the grandest cathedral, or in the tiniest storefront, wherever two or three are gathered in the name of Christ – Christ is there. We are the Church, the body of Christ, and right here in this room is the salvation of God."

Evidence of the pitfalls of the urban setting were immediately obvious as the clergy, vesting on the sidewalk outside the storefront church situated on a busy side street, were approached by a drunk cyclist who stopped to shout curses at the Bishop and other clergy. Later, another would walk in during the liturgy and begin speaking loudly in mock response to the celebrant. Both encounters proved innocuous but nevertheless represented a new challenge for the normally remote Kichwa community. The undeterred congregation gracefully handled these interruptions seeming to take them as merely new opportunities to express their resolve, occasions seldom seen in their usually remote settings.

Having arrived and vested half way through the already begun service, Bp. Haines commenced with the confirmations at the close of Fr. Luis's sermon. This was a special service for Fr. Carlos as both his wife and his father-in-law were confirmed together along with nine

others (including more than one Maria!) Following the final meal of the day, the weary but elated team returned to the haven of their hotel for the night.

NOTE: A brief word about meals. The Kichwa live in a series of indigenous communities persisting almost exclusively on subsistence agricultural practices. The customary meals that they offer to their guests are almost uniformly identical because they offer the food that they themselves cultivate. The staple foods have not been recently purchased; they have been recently harvested. Basic meals invariably include corn on the cob, fava beans, golden potatoes, cheese, sliced onions and tomatoes. When times are good, a guest can perhaps expect something from the market including rice, skillfully roasted chicken, cuy (guinea pig), or even a piece of beef. Communities in higher and colder climates will often offer a hot chicken-vegetable and rice soup to warm the heart and not infrequently, a small cup of chicha - a tasty and mildly alcoholic drink made of fermented corn and produced in enormous amounts – like were talking a fifty-five gallon drum of it!

Monday August 18, 2025 – Shopping and Farewell Dinner

On Monday, with most of the scheduled work concluded, the team was able to take some time in the city of Riobamba visiting a number of shops selling various wool and leather goods but most importantly, Ecuadorian chocolate. That night, a dinner was planned at the hotel for available clergy and their families. With the famous Kichwa speech making skills on display again, the joyful gathering continued for more than four hours. With a feast reminiscent of those envisioned in biblical parables and prophecies, the group, ranging in age from the youngest of children to the grey hair of grandfathers, all enjoyed food and drink, laughter and conversation in many languages. When the final desert was delivered and the final blessing was pronounced, final goodbyes were made and all returned to their homes and to their rooms for a final night's rest.

Tuesday August 19, 2025

The final day in Ecuador consisted simply of travel back to Quito which was supremely blessed by the rare event of weather so clear that the view of every volcano on the “Avenue of Volcanoes” was visible in crystal clear sight. Chimborazo, Cotopaxi, Iliniza Sud and Norte, Cayambe and others, often shrouded in a veil of clouds, had their snowcapped peaks glistening in the bright sun, sharply accentuated by blue skies above and a patchwork of sprawling green pastures beneath. What a blessing!

The car returned, Matt McBurney seen off to the airport and with the afternoon spent waiting in the hotel lobby for the midnight flight, the day was spent reminiscing over the past days and composing the account you have just finished reading.