



# Sharon Wilcox

Link Letter no. 34 | January 2025

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**Location:** Ecuador



**What I do:** Working with people with learning disabilities, teaching them life skills and seeking to enable them to become independent.



**Bringing hope** where people have given up on God and the church

Dear friends,

A very happy new year to everybody from a very wet Santo Domingo. We are very grateful to God for sending the rains in the middle of December. More of that later.

In August the Baptist church had its 56th anniversary celebrations. It was a time of joy that included two weddings and several baptisms. One couple who were married are part of our new church outreach in Rio Blanco, on the outskirts of Santo Domingo.

In September, we had a training day for the volunteers in Santo Domingo, which included themes such as “What is it like to have a disability?” and safeguarding. Then I went to the Orchid project in Cuenca to do some evaluation of the work there. It was a positive time. Linda, one of the students, enjoyed being a “MasterChef contestant” as she cooked and explained her recipe to everyone present. When I boarded my plane back to Quito, Ecuador’s only Olympic gold medallist from the Paris games, Daniel Pintado, was sitting in front of me. I couldn’t resist a photo opportunity as we left the plane in Quito.



*With Daniel Pintado*

Then in October the Baptist church joined in a march for Christ in the city. This was partly to evangelise, to pray for the situation in Israel and to pray for rain. It normally rains year round in Santo Domingo, with the heaviest rains from November to May. We had not had rain since the beginning of August, and in September we were subjected to daily power cuts of 6–8 hours a day. That increased to 12–14 hours a day in November. The rest of the country was in a similar situation. Ecuador relies heavily on hydroelectricity, so the rain is very important. The power cuts finally stopped on 20 December. I got caught in my first heavy downpour on Christmas Day.

We had two new students start with us in the project in Santo Domingo in October and another two in December. Most of November was spent settling in the new students while juggling the power cuts and preparing things for our Christmas sale. We eventually held the sale on a Sunday before Christmas after the church service at the Sublime Grace church where we work. The other Orchid projects also held sales of their work. Please pray that the new students will make friends in the group and enjoy learning new skills. Also, for the volunteers and me as we work out how to help them and continue to develop other skills with the rest of the group. We also have a new volunteer, Veronica, who started in January.

**Support Sharon Wilcox:**  
[churchmissionsociety.org/wilcox](http://churchmissionsociety.org/wilcox)

**With Jesus  
With each other  
To the edges**



We finished work in the project on the Friday before Christmas and restarted on 7 January. I had planned to do three days of training for new volunteers in Quito before we restarted, but the President declared three days of public holidays and the volunteers wanted to take advantage of them to visit family. So the training must be rearranged for February.

On Christmas Eve I helped my missionary friends from Live by Faith take meals to people who found themselves on the streets for Christmas. There were not so many people this year, so we shared some of the meals with street cleaners and other people working late. Each meal was offered with a prayer. I don't think anyone refused us praying with them this

time. We listened to people's problems and anything else they wanted to share with us before praying with them. It is always a real blessing for me to be a part of this ministry.

On Christmas Day other English-speaking missionaries and I were invited to have lunch with Abby, from Latin Link, at her house with her and her parents, who were visiting for three weeks. It was lovely to spend time together.

The day was spoiled later in the evening when I received a call from friends who I had been out with on Christmas Eve (Maria and Roberto). They were taking some furniture to a new location when the driver stopped so he and Roberto could better secure the ropes holding the furniture. Another truck swerved into them, killing their driver but missing Roberto. Please pray for the driver's family and friends as they adjust to life without him.

On 23 December I received a call from the older sister of Edwar, one of my students, to say that their mother was in hospital after suffering a severe stroke. I knew Edwar would struggle not having his mum around. His parents are divorced, however I discovered that his dad had looked after the children over Christmas. Edwar's mum was discharged from hospital nine days later. She is paralysed down one side of her body but is grateful to God that she can speak and still remember things. Pray with us for her full recovery and for Edwar and his sisters as they adjust to a new way of life.

As you can probably tell it has been an emotional time recently but also a time of real blessing.

I will now continue preparing everything for my visit to the UK in April.

Every blessing and many thanks for all your support.

Sharon



*Photos from top to bottom: Team training day in Santo Domingo; Linda cooking tuna burgers; march for Christ; Christmas Eve*



## Bringing hope where people have given up on God and church

I've loved hearing recent mission stories from others in my area of work. One of my students, Jonathan, has grown spiritually and got his first job as he's gained life skills, and a Breakfast Club in Hull celebrated 25 years of food, community and steps of faith. Read more at [churchmissionsociety.org/bringhope](https://churchmissionsociety.org/bringhope)