



Becky Stephen serves as the Sr Director of Global Engagement for TMS Global, overseeing TMS's 190 cross-cultural workers in 34 countries. The month of May she came to Ecuador to see a little bit of what God is doing here, in and through those of us who are serving in this beautiful Country. She wanted to share some of her thoughts with you.

Dear Friends and Fans of Graham & Sharon,

I never know what I will find when I visit a TMS Global worker. Our cross-cultural workers are a diverse bunch of people, in different seasons of life, engaged in highly varied forms of ministry, each with their own particular visions, dreams, concerns and needs, living and working in unique cultural contexts. So I try to be ready for anything. But I was not prepared for what I saw in Ecuador.



I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. Deuteronomy 5:9-10

In many families there is a generational pattern of absent or abusive fathers, unwed teenaged mothers (often the result of rape by a family member), pressure by family and society to remain unmarried, and a culture of cover-up which is typical of people trapped in a cycle of abuse. This "normal" family pattern is repeated in every generation, inside and outside of the church. The organized Church does little to help, preferring to keep the peace by preserving the status quo.



This is the context into which TMS Global workers, including the Nichols, land in Ecuador. So it was an unexpected gift to Sharon and Graham when they arrived and were asked to do something they'd never done before: children's ministry. From the start, they dived in head first with great passion and skill they didn't even know they had! The Bishop of the Methodist Church in Ecuador, who oversees their work, praises them for their initiative, their organizational savvy, and for the way they've developed leaders for the ministry from their local congregation. I could see that firsthand. It was as if this particular church the Nichols were assigned to, filled with people of vision and heart, were just waiting for someone to open the door and invite them to walk this way.

Sharon has done a beautiful job of identifying, training and developing leaders for the growing children's ministries in their city of Santo Domingo and beyond. It was fun to watch Ecuadorians run the various ministries with kids during the week, while Sharon and Graham prepared snacks and stood in the background. Sharon's aim over the next year or 2 is to raise up and train more leaders from other churches who will be equipped to respond to the many invitations other neighborhoods are extending to "come over and help us, too!"

Graham is always present, serving in the background. But he is noticed. Few men darken the door of church. And male role models are hard to come by. So Graham's calm, loving, servant-hearted presence is an important part of the ministry. He's also actively discipling a handful of men who have never had special attention paid to them and their spiritual growth. God knows the impact his leadership is having in their lives and in their homes! Graham's aim over the next year or 2 is for these men to turn around and share what they are learning with others, so that there is a growing circle of men who are actively following Jesus in their families and in their communities.

That's their prayer, and mine now, too: that they will be part of what God is doing in their city to bring about transformation of hearts in this generation so that the patterns of abuse and abandonment will be broken in Jesus' Name in the generations to come.

Because of Jesus,

Becky Stephen

Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever! Deuteronomy 5:29

Some ways to pray for Graham & Sharon:

- **Daily they are faced with decisions of how to deal with social evils and generational sins that impact the people they love and serve. Pray for discernment and wisdom.**
- **As they disciple children and actively reach out to families, ask God to teach them how to pray in order to see spiritual strongholds broken so that these kids – and their parents – can live the new life that Jesus promised.**
- **Workers grow weary over time from the burdens they bear on behalf of others, from the stress of cross-cultural living (even if they love it), from their own personal and family issues, and from the strain of leadership. Pray for a fresh move of the Spirit in their lives.**

Donations to help support the Nichols may be made to *new mailing address:

TMS Global

P.O. Box 936559
Atlanta, Georgia 31193-6559

Nichols Support #0368 on the memo line
OR Via

TMS Global ~ Website Giving Info:

<http://www.tms-global.org/give>

For giving Missionary support please use the **"Give to a Missionary"** form and specify the 4-digit code **0368** OR you may just type our names **Graham and Sharon Nichols**



Becky with David Sarabia, Pastor of the Evangelical UMC~Jesús de Nazareth, Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas



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