

# Sharon Wilcox

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CHURCH  
MISSION  
SOCIETY



*The call in action*

## Dear friends,

I cannot believe that it is May already and that I am now back in Ecuador after spending two months in England. It was lovely to meet up with so many of you but I am sorry to those I wasn't able to see (but hopefully next time!).

My time back home was busy and a real blessing in so many ways. Visiting churches for the first or second time, sharing what I have been doing in Ecuador, as well as spending time in my home church, was an amazing experience. On Good Friday we gave out hot cross buns in Thatcham Market while the church music group sang for everyone. I want to thank all of you who have encouraged and supported me in my decision to return to Santo Domingo for another three years. Thank you also for your hospitality and generosity towards both me and the Orchid Project. I know that it is also God's will that I am back here.

In March, I had the opportunity to take part in a conference on theology, mission and intellectual disability. It's begun a conversation that will hopefully continue, looking to find ways to both involve and encourage the participation of people with disabilities in church life around the world. I have to admit that some of the theological discussions challenged me. However, by the end of the three days, it seemed everyone was in agreement with the notion that the church is richer when no one is excluded. Since the age of 14, I have known that people with intellectual disabilities enhance our lives. The conference enabled delegates to share experiences and resources. I also met Pat Blanchard (a fellow mission partner, based in Peru) and was grateful for her first aid skills when I twisted my ankle.

I also spent a couple of days at CMS House in Oxford, checking on my well-being and receiving some training. It was good to catch up with people as well meet some new members of the office team. However, it wasn't all work and no play! What I planned to do, I was able to achieve. Visits to family, friends and a wedding all took place, including eating ice cream on the seafront in chilly Scarborough. I did more travelling by train than I would have liked but it was all worth it. I also managed to escape to Amsterdam for a few days to enjoy the tulip fields (*see the photo overleaf*). Truly wonderful.

I returned to Ecuador and had the opportunity to go to a conference/retreat in Quito for four days. It was free to any English speaking missionary in Latin America. It was run by Pure Joy International and 15 North American women came "to love on us". They taught us, worshipped with us, shared their testimonies and brought many gifts made by women in their churches back home. It was a very special time for the 50 of us who managed to get a place

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**Name:** Sharon Wilcox

**Location:** Ecuador

**My call:** To show God's love in action to people with learning disabilities.

**My role:** To teach life skills that enable people to become independent, valued members of their community.



*Church musicians in Thatcham market place*

and it was free. There are some awesome women serving the Lord in Latin America, and I met several of them.

I also attended the graduation ceremony for the second group of students to go through the card making training, with Craft Aid International, run by Lydia and Mark Trezise (CMS short-term people in mission). Sadly, it was their last weekend in Ecuador and they have now resumed life back in England. However, Andy and Jess Lynch have arrived to take over the running, and the third group is due to start in a few weeks. Please pray for them and their three-year-old Frankie as they adjust to life here.

The following week, we resumed The Orchid (the project I run for adults with learning disabilities, giving them life skills), and two new people have joined: a teenager called Jonathan, who used to be at the Life in Abundance Trust school, and an 18-year-old young lady with Down syndrome called Katrina. Camilla and Gloria were particularly happy that we have another female student – praise God for answering Gloria's prayers. The whole group were excited that I was back, not least because they expected that I had brought something back for them from England. They were not wrong, and it appears that they like creme eggs and jammy dodgers!

Gloria and I have always agreed that we cannot safely work with more than 10 students unless we have more volunteers, so we plan to go to the church where we work to see if we can persuade some people to come and join us. Your prayers for that process would be appreciated.

While I was in England, the church continued the construction work and there is now an upstairs floor in progress with the kitchen hopefully finished in a week or so. We have already restarted the gardening project, and were all exhausted after clearing the vegetable patch of the weeds that had grown since December – lots of rain hadn't helped! I am planning to teach the group new things they can make to sell, including beeswax wraps, soaps and sugar scrub hand sanitiser. Again, please pray that it will be fun and easy for them to do.

The fellowship ministry team that I am part of is busy preparing a family day at the Baptist church in June. We will then be involved in organising something similar at the church anniversary in August. The idea with these events is to try to unite the church, as there have been several negative issues simmering between the membership over the years and it appears to be continuing.

Thank you so much for your continued prayers and support. Enjoy the summer months, wherever you may be.

Blessings

Sharon



*Photos from top to bottom: the graduation ceremony for the second group of students to go through the card-making training; members of The Orchid in February; weeding the vegetable plot; tulips in Holland.*

## GOING FURTHER WITH CHURCH MISSION SOCIETY

Did you know that CMS has a free online hub full of mission related resources to help you put your call into action? It has become one of the most visited parts of our website, with 15,000 visitors in the first year. Go to: [churchmissionsociety.org/resources](http://churchmissionsociety.org/resources)

If you would like to discuss your mailings with us or to receive this link letter on a regular basis, please email [supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org](mailto:supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org) or call 01865 787400

You can give to Sharon at:  
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