



# Ecuador

## Republic of Ecuador

Latin America

### Geography

**Area** 269,178 sq km. Amazon jungle in the east, high Andean Sierra in the centre, fertile coastal plain on Pacific Coast. Also the Galapagos Islands, 1,000 km to the west.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	13,774,909	1.07%
2020	15,375,550	1.05%
2030	16,678,751	0.74%

**Capital** Quito 1,845,804. **Other major city** Guayaquil 2.7 million. **Urbanites** 66.9%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 31%. **Life expectancy** 75 yrs.

### Peoples

**Spanish-speaking** 56.4%. Non-Amerindian; much racial mixing: Ecuadorian 50.1%; Afro-Ecuadorian 5.2%; Zambo 1.1%.

**Amerindian** 40.8%.

**Quichua** (Quechua in surrounding nations) 40.5%. Quichua Mestizo 24.5%. Ten other groups, the largest: Chimborazo 10%; Otavalo 4.3%; Canari 1.0%; Tena 0.5%.

**Other Amerindians** 0.5%. 10 small groups, some numbering in the mere hundreds.

**Other** 2.8%. English-speaking 1.5%; German-speaking 0.7%; Middle Easterners; East Asians.

**Literacy** 91%. **Official language** Spanish. **All languages** 25. **Indigenous languages** 23. **Languages with Scriptures** 3Bi 13NT 14por 3wi.p.

### Economy

The main export commodities are oil, flowers, shrimp and bananas; Ecuador is the world's largest exporter of bananas. Oil exploitation enriches a small minority (and the foreign oil companies), but Amerindian groups and the

environment endure great loss with no compensation. Since the banking system collapsed in 1999 and the country defaulted on its debts, there has been encouraging economic growth. Poverty is still rife and economic disparity massive.

**HDI Rank** 80<sup>th</sup>/182. **Public debt** 25.1% of GDP. **Income/person** \$3,928 (8% of USA).

### Politics

Independent from Spain in 1830. Political stability has been rare; presidents rarely last even 18 months in the job. The broadening democracy brings some political voice to the long-oppressed Quichua. The need for constitutional reform and political housecleaning is evident, and Ecuador sees itself aligning with the increasingly assertive leftist governments in other parts of South America.

### Religion

The culture is strongly moulded by Catholicism; though there is freedom of religion, rural populations are not so receptive to change.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Christian	94.45	13,010,402	1.0%
Non-religious	4.85	668,083	3.0%
Ethnoreligionist	0.36	49,590	0.0%
Chinese	0.16	22,040	1.1%
Baha'i	0.14	19,285	1.1%
Muslim	0.03	4,132	9.6%
Jewish	0.01	1,377	1.1%

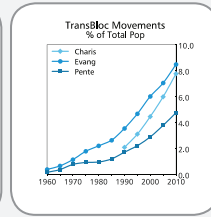
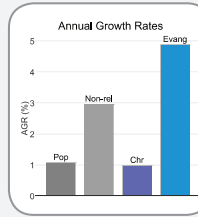
Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	49	6.05	834,000	4.1%
Independent	82	2.44	335,000	6.1%
Anglican	1	0.02	2,000	2.1%
Catholic	1	80.58	11,100,000	0.6%
Orthodox	1	0.02	2,000	2.2%
Marginal	2	3.11	428,000	3.6%
Unaffiliated		3.30	457,000	-4.1%
<i>Doubly affiliated</i>		-1.09	-150,000	0.0%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Catholic Church	C	2,440	6,098,901	11,100,000
Assoc of Indian Ev	P	1,200	120,000	240,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	820	72,000	230,000
Latter-day Saints(Mormon)	M	400	122,981	198,000
Independent churches	I	400	77,477	172,000
Assemblies of God	P	1,161	65,000	130,000
Ch of God (Cleveland)	P	175	38,000	95,000
Seventh-day Adventist	P	117	49,102	82,000
Foursquare Evang Ch	P	520	61,000	80,520
Baptist Convention	P	255	24,000	36,000
CMA	P	88	12,963	35,000
Other denominations[78]		2,524	130,586	303,724
<i>Doubly affiliated</i>				-150,000
<b>Total Christians[136]</b>		<b>10,100</b>	<b>6,872,010</b>	<b>12,552,244</b>

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
<b>Evangelicals</b>			
Evangelicals	8.5	1,170,089	4.9%
<b>Renewalists</b>			
Charismatics	7.8	1,070,313	6.4%
Pentecostals	4.8	657,141	5.8%

### Missionaries from Ecuador

**P,I,A** 162 (106 long-term) in 19 agencies: to Ecuador 41, Europe 87.



## Answers to Prayer

- 1 The impact of the gospel on sections of the Quichua** is a modern-day miracle. In 1967, there were only 120 believers among 3 million people; now, there are some areas with over 50% evangelicals. Most notable is the 100-year ministry of **Avant**, with approximately 240,000 linked with the churches planted through them.
- 2 The steady growth of evangelicals.** Ecuador had Latin America's lowest percentage of evangelicals in 1960, but this has increased from 17,000 seventy-fold to 1.2 million in 2010. Most growth is in the rapidly growing cities and among the Quichua. Evangelical churches in Ecuador may not have the size of Brazilian churches or the proportion of Central America's, but they are growing in number, in size, in maturity and in social impact, particularly in the last 10 years.
- 3 HCJB Radio**, launched in 1931, was the first of the great Christian mission radio broadcasters. Today, this ministry is known around the world, and both Ecuador and the world are blessed as a result.

## Challenges for Prayer

- 1 The country's greatest need may be stable government.** The seemingly endless carousel of presidents and finance ministers further undermines progress. Leadership needs the courage and stickability to tackle economic injustice, social problems and the deep-seated corruption which favours an entrenched elite.
- 2 The Catholic Church** sees its privileged position erode, even as evangelical and marginal groups rapidly increase. There are sporadic, local incidents of mob violence, burning of churches and intimidation against evangelicals. Pray for continued freedom of religion, harmony among denominations and an increase in spiritual life among Catholics. There is a modest but growing charismatic movement in the Catholic Church in Ecuador.
- 3 Evangelical numbers are large enough to significantly impact society.** The potential is great, but many in-house issues need resolution. Many churches exist independently, with no accountability or authority structure. Pray for the following:
  - a) Vision and growth to continue** – some churches have lost their evangelistic zeal. Mega-churches are springing up in urban areas, but not all are concerned with continued evangelism of the unreached.
  - b) Unity within the great variety of churches.** Issues of denomination, class, culture and personality often lead to division and parochial attitudes. For the Church to exercise a rightful impact on Ecuadorian life, these divisions must be overcome. The Evangelical Confraternity (COMEC) is a network linking most evangelicals in vision and in speaking out on issues of social concern.
  - c) Cultural sensitivity and integration of Quichua and Lowland Indians** into the national Church scene. Amerindians compose the lion's share of evangelicals, but much of the power and influence falls within the Spanish-speaking evangelical population. Pray that both groups would fellowship and cooperate without losing their respective cultural distinctiveness.

d) **Improved availability and quality of pastoral training.** False teachings and evangelical nominalism are otherwise inevitable. Bible schools and seminaries are increasing. The Quichua Training Institute (**MTW**) is just one of many institutions supported by outside groups such as **OMS**, Foursquare and **AoG**. TEE programmes and In Service Training are demonstrably effective at developing leaders, and they are affordable and flexible.

e) **Effective and appropriate ministry to children and young people.** Poverty and child labour are particularly widespread, so ministry must be of a holistic nature and relevant to this generation, which makes up the bulk of the population.

**4** **False teachings seemingly prosper** as marginal sects and Catholic syncretism rapidly spread, usually at the expense of traditional Catholics or evangelicals. Pray for the error of these groups to be made known; pray for ministers and laity to be equipped to address them with truth and love.

**5** **Pioneer work among the small jungle tribes** attracted worldwide attention in 1956 when one **MAF**, one **Avant** and three Brethren missionaries were killed by the primitive Waorani (Auca). Nearly all of these tribes now have churches and the Scriptures through the work of various missionary groups. Pray for:

a) **The maturing of the jungle churches** to cope with modernity and the onslaught of the Spanish and Quichua cultures. While many profess to be Christian, practicing believers are in fact much fewer.

b) **The efforts by Amerindian believers to preserve their lands** and promote their spiritual development. FEINE (Ecuadorian Federation of Evangelical Indians) is a key body to this end.

c) **Relationships with the outside world.** Anti-missionary propaganda from humanistic anthropologists, leftist agitators, traders, jungle exploiters and even well-meaning but ignorant Christians all threaten or delay the effective flowering of the gospel among these unique peoples.

**6** **Bible translation and distribution.** Ecuador was one of the first countries entered by **WBT**. They were involved in 12 NT translation projects before they were obliged to withdraw. Pray for completion of translation programmes in progress. Pray for the effective use of the Bibles and NTs now available; some Ecuadorians still copy the Bible by hand, verse-by-verse. The Bible Society has a pivotal role in promoting and distributing the Scriptures in this nation.

**7** **Missions vision is young but growing.** The number of Ecuadorians serving in cross-cultural mission grew from 10 in 1996 to over 100 in 2005. This number continues to increase as churches catch the vision. Congregations are learning the commitment and cost involved. Foreign groups such as **OM** and **SIM** and national bodies such as AMEE (Evangelical Missionary Association of Ecuador) serve the Church through mobilization.

**8** **Missions.** The largest groups are **HCJB**, **MAF**, **AoG**, **CB/CMML**, **AV**, **OMS**, **IT**. Many opportunities remain for missionary recruits in supportive ministries, church planting and pioneer work in the groups mentioned below. Pray for good church-mission relationships. The ever-present danger of administrative and financial paternalism threatens to impose Western patterns and stifle Ecuadorian initiatives.

**9** **The less-evangelized:**

a) **The slum-dwellers of Quito and Guayaquil.** Over 60% of the latter's population are extremely poor, and many live in slums built on a polluted marsh. Few Christian workers have a vision for these deprived people.

b) **The upper and middle classes** are relatively unresponsive (**CMA**, **OMS** and others).

c) **University and school students.** Over eight agencies are involved in campus ministries among the 250,000 students (on more than 300 campuses), including **CCCI**, **CECE (IFES)**, **YFC**, **LAM** and four denominational groups. There is still much room for growth.

d) **The Afro-Ecuadorian people** are only 0.03% evangelical. Although there are many Catholics among them, Spiritism is the true spiritual power at work in their midst. Pray for a breakthrough among this unique group.

- e) **The 28,000 people living on the distant and barren Galapagos Islands** now have a growing ministry in their midst through MVI. The islands host many eco-tourists who, through Darwin's legacy, are often hostile to biblical Christianity.
- f) **Loja province** is isolated from mainstream Ecuadorian life and is only 0.1% evangelical. Operation Esperanza is a multi-agency effort to see fruit in this region through prayer, radio, evangelism and holistic ministry (**SIM, OMS, WV**). Good Shepherd Radio broadcasts the gospel to many isolated villages otherwise difficult to access.

## 10 Christian media.

- a) **Radio.** There are over 1,200 hours per week of Christian broadcasts in 12 languages thanks to **HCJB**, *Radio Biblica Cristiana*, Christian Vision and others. **HCJB** also has an extensive range of supportive ministries – including follow-up, education, pastoral training and medicine (two teaching hospitals and clinics). Pray also for the one Shuar and two Quichua Christian radio stations, under local leadership but started by Avant, broadcasting to these indigenous groups. There are eight full-time radio stations in all; pray for lasting fruit.
- b) **TV** is a burgeoning ministry in Ecuador. Channels include *AsomaVisión*, *Enlace Ecuador* and *Unión Television Network*. Pray for programming that not only blesses, but also teaches, encourages and disciples.
- c) **The JESUS film** in Spanish is widely aired on TV as well as projected as a film. It is also available in Chimborazo and Shuar. Pray for the several hundred teachers trained to use the CrossRoads curriculum, “Life at the CrossRoads”, showing the JESUS film.