

I took a short trip into the jungle to find a location for a future news article

From a Unification Church Missionary in South America

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This month I took a short trip into the jungle. I was trying to find a location for a future news article. The difference between that land, compared to the colonial capital locked in the mountains, was shocking. I jotted some quick impressions in my notebook. Maybe it can give you some pictures of this very different land.

Have you ever seen the dawn breaking through the humid mist? The great trees and jungle etch the broad horizon with the exception of some broad vista that never comes -- only more of that wall of green. Everywhere are those vines 20 to 50 feet long -- thicker than a man's wrist -- trailing from the tallest trees. The little wood and cane houses squat on small slivers of earth, scorched and scratched out of the jungle expanse. Every board, every sign of man looks so foreign -- as if it were all carried in on human backs.

The people themselves are unique. Somehow they seem a part of the rain soaked mud and corrugated sheet metal homes half-naked, the color of the earth itself. Seasoned Indians, blacks, and mestizos are everywhere. There are naked children in the muddy, front clearings. Through the great banana trees you can see a sun blackened native herding Brahman bulls and cattle. Strange, India has found a place here. The scene includes the drone and hum of cicadas, the blooming hibiscus, and the muddy expanse of the great river. Broad and rapid, it creates the much yearned for vista in the humid jungle tightness.

But often the mark of man is more savage and abrupt. Suddenly in a jungle clearing is the stinging smell of oil and burning gas. Orange flames mark the serpent of pipelines snaking along the muddy roads. The heat is like a blanket and the sky is crowded with rain clouds. Time seems to take on the rhythm of a ferryman at a wide river -- going back and forth, back and forth with no attempt at speed. The sun comes and goes, the rain starts and stops. And the jungle sits in the heat. In everyone's face there is a yearning for liberation from boredom. The roads have pierced these jungles, but how great must be the hope and vision to awaken such a land! Only a tribe of God would not be defeated or put to sleep by such a wilderness. Disease, heat, boredom, and a kind of spiritual suffocation and sloth are everywhere. To such tropical arena as this, we are called. Dear Father, please make our hearts large enough in love to embrace and give rebirth to this, too!