

A Galápagos Pilgrimage

BY CARMEN LAU

In August, tangled strands of fate brought a *Spectrum* pilgrim group to San Cristóbal, gateway to Galápagos paradise, where we navigated to places famous for being the soil in which Darwin's curious mind found a context to form the theory of evolution: a proposition which many believe is an existential threat to Seventh-day Adventism.

For eight days, we basked in companionship, hiking, snorkeling, talking, and listening while our boat, the *Archipel I*, sailed from island to island. Eight days is not enough. There is more to see.

The trip gave solitude with landscapes unfettered by roads, resorts, signs, or buildings. We were detached from the internet but tethered to a reality show that exhibited a palette of nature's adaptations. I found the journey to be a celebration of survival. Having survived fifteen months of pandemic, sixteen people, with different backstories of how they came to join the adventure, formed a congenial, energetic team of sojourners.

Galápagos wildlife inspired us when we learned how it thrives, harnessing nature's epigenetic tool kit, through storms, pestilence, and human encroachment. Beaks change morphology. Iguanas adapt to terrain as necessary.

Our hearts were full as we noticed the fearless, Eden-like attitude of Galápagos creatures. Sea lions were like playful pups, and schools of fish surrounded us, oblivious to our clunky underwater cameras and flailing arms. Blue-footed boobies and frigatebirds humbled and amazed our beloved community when we saw how they allowed our troupe to traipse through ground that had been sanctified for nesting and raising the young.

Many sights, sounds, and stories from the trip percolate in my mind, but what stands out is the God-given ability for adaptability and the resilience to thrive in seemingly difficult environments. We saw this each day of the journey, and we heard about it from each



Carmen and Yung Lau

other when we shared personal stories or heard informal lectures from the professors with us.

After the Galápagos pilgrimage, we re-enter the stark reality of disease, division, and fear. I pray that the memory of the eight-day sojourn will not merely cause us to yearn for the promised day to come, but also remind us anew of a God-given fortitude available to us each moment.



CARMEN LAU is board chair of Adventist Forum.