

BORDER *Reflections*

reflexiones de la frontera

Summer 2010

Dear Friends in Christ:

When short-term teams arrive for their mission trip experience, we conduct an orientation meeting. One of the things I try to point out is that in God's economy He has specifically put each of us here this week for His purpose. So this week we want to focus and pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance, and how this experience fits into God's will for us.

At the end of the week we have a de-brief time, where we get feedback about the mission experience from the group before they return home. One of the parting questions I like to ask is, "Where do we go from here?"

One significant choice that our heavenly Father wants us to make is this: Do we want to step out of our comfort zone and be brave, or are we OK with staying on the porch where it's safe? Gently, lovingly, our heavenly Father wants us to know that we simply cannot be both.

Following God's will in a fallen world is inherently dangerous. Over and over in Scriptures, Jesus teaches us that His disciples will suffer for following Him. In **1 Peter** it says, *"Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But, even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed..... . For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil."*

There are two things that are always the will of God, and always dangerous in a fallen world: Telling the truth and loving needy people. In fact, if my life of following Jesus isn't challenging, uncomfortable and inconvenient, I should probably pause and check to see if it's Jesus I am following.

Telling the truth and loving needy people is inherently unsafe in a fallen world of lies and selfishness. As Christians, Jesus invites us to love needy people.

1 John 4:20 says, *"For anyone who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen."*

Think about those who are most needy and hurting: those in your family, those in your church, those in your community, those on the other side of town. Serving them and loving them is uncomfortable and inconvenient. Jesus tells us this is where we can find the deepest joy.

If you are pondering and struggling with the decision to either step out of your comfort zone or stay on the porch, remember, Jesus assures us of His protection as we "GO".

Ministry Update

Las Tierras Mission, El Paso

In July groups arrived from Columbia MD, Philadelphia PA, and Atlanta GA to continue work on the Rodriguez house and the Pena's fence.

The Rodriguez house is nearing completion. When a project gets to the stage where advanced skills are required to complete the job, notice is sent out. Columbia answered the call by sending five skilled carpenters to set the interior doors and apply the trim. In God's perfect timing Maria's father-in-law became available to do the tile work, which was nearly complete when we departed. The last major thing to complete is the kitchen. Pray that God will provide money and workers to complete this phase.



The Pena's have experienced some negative response from the neighborhood as the result of being recipients of God's Grace through the help they've received and becoming members of Las Tierras Church and hosting a weekly Bible study. For security and privacy the Pena's purchased fence materials to go around their property. Again in God's perfect timing He sent folks from Philadelphia and Atlanta to form and pour nearly 700 feet of concrete base for the fence.



In the daily devotional Pastor Padilla reminds us that this house and fence, like all man made structures, will in time crumble. While God has given each worker the gifts and skills to build something that will in time crumble, He has also planned eternal impact because of these projects.

The Holy Spirit through Pastor Padilla will not only work in the hearts of the Rodriguez and Pena families, but their friends and the neighbors as well, using these projects as the stepping stone.

As God continues to bless the growth of Las Tierras Church through the hard work of Pastor Manuel and Kim Padilla, so do the financial needs increase for the ministry. Please pray with us that those needs will be filled.

Iglesia La Vid, Laredo

I made a trip to Laredo in June to secure final pricing on materials and sub-contractor labor for completion of the church building. I also prepared a sequential schedule of remaining tasks for the La Vid leadership to follow through to completion of the project.

These steps are part of the process to transfer responsibility, and the sense of ownership of a facility to the congregation. BEAMM provides resources in money and short-term teams to help construct the building. BEAMM assists in leadership training of the elders. BEAMM through the presbytery helps the Mission work become particularized and self-sufficient.

In God's timing and blessing all of these parts and pieces will start to mold into a successful church plant.

A pivotal time in this process occurred this summer. BEAMM support personnel were scheduled the first three weeks of July in other border locations and a large team from Georgia was coming to do construction at La Vid on July 11th. I received an anxious call from the church on July 2nd, "what are we going to do?" "Not a problem," I told them. "Take the outline I left with you. It has next steps listed. Order the special black paint required for the ceiling structure, secure a painter with the proper spray equipment, schedule lift equipment to reach the 25' ceiling height, schedule people to move all the pews around that will be in the way of the painting crew. And oh, by the way, all has to be completed before the team arrives! And oh, by the way, money is limited so stay within the budget. And oh by the way, note to cover the floor and walls from the over spray. No problem. And oh, by the way, we are praying for you."

With the 4th of July weekend on top of them, the paint couldn't ship in time. So they sent someone 150 miles one way to pick up the paint Saturday morning. By the time they realized some type of scaffolding had to be delivered, the rental

company was closed for the long weekend. Through it all they did get the ceiling painted before the team arrived.

I got the next phone call as the team arrived for their week of construction. One of the La Vid elder trainees was in a panic, "what are we going to do?" "Not a problem," I told him. "Take the outline I left with you. It has next steps listed. Complete hanging the drywall and finish it. Prime and paint the sanctuary." "But the Georgia team says they don't know how to do those things." "Not a problem," I told him. "The past two summers I trained the church kids (you know, the same ones that are your praise band, the ones that organized all the VBS activities, the ones who work construction every time a team comes to town) how to do drywall and paint. So they will be your construction leaders and teachers. And oh, by the way, sheetrock and finishing materials will have to be delivered. And oh, by the way, you will need some scaffold to reach the 15' high walls for painting. And oh, by the way, the paint will have to be delivered. Don't forget to pick a color. And oh, by the way, be sure to cover the floor ahead of the painting. No problem. And oh, by the way, we are praying for you."

When we arrived the last week of July, I couldn't believe the progress that had been made. The church kids were so proud of their accomplishment, successfully leading the construction for a week. The Georgia team was proud of their newly acquired skills with drywall and painting.

A meeting was called with Pastor Carlos and his leadership team, along with Dan Young, BEAMM Regional Director. "Guys, this meeting is to acknowledge and congratulate you for a job well done orchestrating the ceiling painting and leading the Georgia team through the construction process and your willingness to step forward, trust God, and take command. Your church project is now in your hands."

The response of these men to the challenge of assuming responsibility for La Vid's future was truly amazing. Again, God's hand so evidently guiding and leading the process.

Equally as exciting this week was the opportunity for the groups from Lakewood in Dallas, and Kirk in St. Louis to be a part of this special week.



Lakewood and Kirk have been major participants in the BEAMM ministry for years. They have faithfully fielded teams



to the Juarez, MX, projects for many years. They

never hesitated when the next projects were in El Paso and Laredo. They just stepped up and asked "What can we do?" These folks have always conducted an outstanding VBS program and they bring many construction skills to the field, as they did again this summer at La Vid.

La Vid can use skilled individuals and teams to help complete the project. Contact Dan Young at BEAMM to arrange participation.

Haiti

Recently Rich Wolfe, MTW Regional Director for Central America & the Caribbean, and I made a trip to Haiti. The purpose of our trip was to look at possible opportunities to partner with existing works and to initiate plans for a new church in Gonaives and a church/school in Docine.

Our first stop after arriving in Port-au-Prince was at Reformation Hope in nearby La Plaines. This is the site where Pastor Jean Paul has a church, school and orphanage. The January earthquake totally leveled the school and church. Just before the school collapsed the little kids had just left the building because of a last minute schedule change. The building housing the orphanage received damage, but was repairable.



Today a new church and school building are complete and in use. The number of orphans has nearly doubled. Future plans at Reformation Hope include expanding the orphanage, developing a medical clinic, and creating a vocational-technical school.

Next we headed north over the mountains to Mirebalais where we met up with Brian Kelso of Great Commission Alliance. We were treated to a nice lunch and toured the recently completed guest house that will house short-term teams. We also walked the property where a new clinic will be built and also a planned community that will house 5000 displaced people from Port-au-Prince. We also visited an orphanage nearby where Great Commission would like to expand.



We continued north to Gonaives which is a 3½ hour drive north of Port-au-Prince on roads that have the deepest pot holes I've ever seen. Gonaives is where Pastor Esaie Etienne has two works. The first is Trinity Presbyterian church, which meets in a house, or I should say partly in a house and mostly in the yard. The Lord is doing great things in this church. We are planning a new facility for this location.



The other exciting work Esaie has in place is a church/school in Docine. Docine is a very poor community outside of Gonaives with a population of about 10,000. They currently meet under a tinned roof shed with thatched sides and dirt floor. The 80 plus kids that attend school here are the neatest little bunch you'd ever want to meet.

I am currently preparing construction drawings, a material list, and a budget for the Docine church/school project. We are planning a new church building, eight classrooms, and a kitchen/dining area. There will be a water well drilled on the property that will also provide water to the neighborhood. Please pray for the remaining funds to come in soon.

Future Plans

I will be making a trip to El Paso at the end of September to help with the Pena masonry enclosure around their property. I will help the Pena's and some folks from Las Tierras Church with layout and to start laying the concrete block wall.

At the end of October we will be returning to Haiti with a group from our own Village 7 Church. The plan is for me to stay on for a few weeks to help get the Docine church/school construction underway.

Prayer and Praise

Thank you for continuing to pray for us. *Please* remember these praises and requests in your prayers:

- Praise God for the growth at Las Tierras in East El Paso. Pray for leadership to emerge from the congregation.

- Praise God for the outreach opportunity with the Pena and Rodriguez families in Montana Vista. Pray that the Holy Spirit continues to work in their hearts.
- Praise God for the growth of His kingdom through the BEAMM ministry along the US/Mexico border.
- Pray that God continues to bless the church plant in Nogales.
- Pray that God will restrain the evil along the border, that His people will take the message of hope in Christ to those who now live in fear.
- Pray for Pastor Manuel and Kim Padilla as they lead the ministry in Montana Vista and pastor Las Tierras.
- Pray God will provide the funds and teams for completion of Iglesia La Vid in Laredo.
- Pray God will continue providing our monthly support as well as one-time. Needs will increase as we minister in Haiti.



The BEAMM ministry is very grateful to its partnership churches who share the vision for advancing God's Kingdom along the border. Again, we too, thank all of you for your prayers, encouragement and financial support! If you haven't already done so, please sign up to be a BEAMM Prayer Warrior! Just go to the BEAMM web site, www.BEAMM.org, then click on this icon to sign up!

Serving Him,

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