
TRINITY GAZETTE

Issue 40 – Special Edition

September 2009

Welcome to the Trinity Gazette!

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This is a special Edition of the gazette, which has come about by the grace of Jesus Christ.

When I spoke with Cary the other night, we went from Chicken pox to the trip to Guatemala in about ten minutes flat, and then we took it a step further, and discussed a special edition to the Gazette for September 12.

She had written this wonderful report on Guatemala which some of us received who are on the mailing list; however, there are so many more people who did not.

Her report that tells the story of the last team of Trinity to go down and visit our sister church, and their works down there and the accomplishment they had.

You will meet people through pictures we all have heard about, you will get to see the little village of Comi, and Chipel and its inhabitants. You will get to see their faces, and maybe it will encourage you to go down to Comi yourself and take part in their lives, sharing the love of God with them.

Editor's Comment

Remember God has created us all as brothers and sisters regardless where, when, how, or to whom we were born. With this said and trust me it is not easy, especially since we are so used to the comfort of home, the electricity, the fresh food, the ability to get to a doctor when needed, the ability to go shopping without having to travel great distances. To have fresh water, a roof over our heads, and sanitation, just to name a few. However, I lived in a so-called third world country I dealt with dirt roads, mud houses, no sanitation, no fresh water unless you pumped it yourself. And yes, the loss of electricity numerous times a day. What stands out to me is the love people have for you, the easiness you can fit into their culture, and the wonderful different experiences of cuisine. It is fun, try it you might be amazed.

With this, I will turn you over to Eric and Cary Ferree's story and I give them my thanks for they took up the call to step up and turn in something to the Gazette, which was important to them. If you have something that is important to you, let me know and we can arrange for a special addition for you as well. Now we have God's people share their stories with God's people and with that, we can and will move His gospel all over the world. Ute



Dearest family and friends,

We would like to relay our most heartfelt thanks for your prayers, well wishes, and monetary contributions during our recent trip to Guatemala. It was an amazing, life-changing week that could not have happened without everyone's support. Following is a brief (we hope!) recap of some of the most impactful moments, God sightings, wonderful memories, and just great stuff! We hope you enjoy and appreciate what we experienced.

Our team arrived in Guatemala Sunday evening (8/9/09) and stayed in Guatemala City as the roads have no lighting and it is a 6-7 hour drive on mountainous roads to reach our final destination. Monday morning, we loaded up and drove to Comitancillo. It ended up taking about 8 hours or so, but we made 3 stops along the way for bathroom breaks, lunch, and snacks.



It doesn't seem that great a distance when you look on the map, but remember, there are LOTS of mountains and valleys between Guatemala City and Comitancillo.

We arrived at Mission House, lovingly called "La Casa" and the girls recognized it right away. You see, Eric had been teaching them lessons about Guatemala, Comi, and Chipel so that they would be prepared. This is one of the pictures they found online before our trip.

The yellow building on the right is La Casa, and Ovidio's truck is parked in front of it. Ovidio is a local to Comitancillo who was educated by some of the people who founded Mission House and is now a missionary in his own home. He is our key contact and an amazing translator! He jokes that when we go to heaven, we will all speak one language and he will be out of a job!





Here is a picture of Ovidio, his wife, Kerry, and his sons (left to right) Kevin, David (with rabbit), and Fernando. The girls, of course, are in front. They became great friends with the boys and LOVED the rabbit!

So, back to the original story line, we arrived at La Casa Monday evening. It is set up like a boarding house with about 10 rooms set up with beds or bunks to fit the different needs of those traveling on mission trips. There is a large common area, living room, a ladies bathroom with 2 stalls & 2 showers, and a men's bathroom that I imagine is set up the same way, downstairs. Upstairs is a kitchen with a large table that can seat about 16 people. It was planned out quite well and was a very comfortable place to crash, learn, and share while we were there.

Tuesday was our first day visiting our sister church in Chipel. Chipel is a Mayan village where they primarily speak a Mayan dialect called Mam. The children who attend school are taught Spanish and most of the adults also speak and understand Spanish. We tried to learn some Mam words and phrases, but our pronunciation was pretty bad! There's this thing you need to do with your tongue and the back of your throat and a chug-like thing. We did try, though! Their common greeting is Chinkolben (phonetic). They extend their hands out, a little higher and more angled than a handshake, touch fingertips, and then raise the hand so that the index finger touches between the eyebrows. Children will often kiss the adults hand as a sign of respect.



So after driving about 40 minutes higher up into the mountains on VERY bumpy clay roads, we arrived at our sister church in Chipel: *Templo Evangelico Congregacion Luz Del Mundo* (Evangelic Temple Light of the World Congregation).

The men went into the church for a men's bible study and the women went to help in the kitchen. We met many Mam ladies who were very gracious. They tried to teach us how to make tortillas, but it's not as easy as it looks! There is definitely an art to be mastered there! We did

our best and had fun talking and sharing with them. They laughed at our Texas shaped tortillas, but they were eaten just the same.



The men's bible study went well and was quite an experience as well. It seems that one of the young men was orphaned and living on the street, shining shoes for money.



One of our team members, Tim, had been orphaned and shined shoes for money when he was a boy, and they were sitting right next to each other. Total God Thing!!! Tim was able to testify to this young man and let him know that it does get better and that all things are possible through Jesus. The men were all given new shoes that were donated by church members back home.



We heard music and went outside to find Tim on the grass with guitar and harmonica a-playin', surrounded by young people. We joined him and helped sing and translate. Hartley joined in on his guitar and hence, they were named the Mariachi Brothers! It was a wonderful God moment to see us all sitting together, in fellowship, praising the Lord our God in song.

Next we called all the children into the church for a VBS (Vacation Bible School) program. Eric was in charge of putting all the VBS programs together and he did a wonderful job. The rest of the team teased him about being so organized, but were also very appreciative.

We started out with a puppet show using Bob the Tomato and Larry the Cucumber from Veggie Tales. Next, I read the story of how Jesus fed the multitudes. Tim and Hartley played their guitars and we sang Jesus Loves Me and Amazing Grace in Spanish. Then we broke into two groups – one group stayed inside for craft time and the other went outside for game time. They switched afterwards so that each child was able to do both.



The craft was making a Fish & Loaves pin and coloring it in. The kids had so much fun and proudly wore their pins home and back the next day. They all wanted to display their artistic ability by being in a picture. (See the pins?!) The game time activity was a scavenger hunt. The children scattered around laughing and giggling. It was like Christmas in August! Then they played Duck, Duck, Goose with Eric.

The children scattered around laughing and giggling. It was like Christmas in August! Then they played Duck, Duck, Goose with Eric.



Next we broke for snack time. Eric brought them goldfish crackers to match the lesson. I told you he was organized!

After VBS was over, the men came and set up chairs in the church for a welcoming service. They sang songs, prayed, and thanked us all for coming. They





asked if the Mariachi Brothers would play them a song, so Tim and Hartley got up and led us in worship. Franz delivered the message and Pier translated into Spanish. We found that their services are generally done in Spanish and some of the praying is done in Mam.

That night, as we headed back to La Casa, we were all changed. It was amazing to see how happy, caring, and giving the Mam people were. In spite of all they lacked, they had something greater than any material possessions. They had love and faith in the

Lord Jesus Christ, and that was enough for them.

Wednesday rolled around and we went to help paint a new building for Mission House. It was to be used as an apartment for one of the new pastors coming from the states. We went and painted until lunch time. Then we returned to La Casa, ate, changed, and went back to Chipel.

As the van approached the final steep climb to our sister church, we saw children standing at the corner. We were told they were waiting for us to arrive. When the van began to climb, several of the boys grabbed onto the rear bumper and actually started to push us up the hill! It was simply unbelievable. Eric says that this one moment made him think of how Jesus must have felt as he entered the city and was greeted by all the people. They were so happy and excited for us to come, that they wanted us up that hill now!



On the first day of VBS we had about 40 children. Today we had almost 120. The children sat up front eagerly waiting for the puppet show to begin. Several mothers and grandmothers sat at the back of the room smiling and watching as well.

After the puppet show, we told the story of the prodigal son and



explained how we are like that son and Jesus is like that father: Jesus is always willing to take us into his arms whenever we come running home.

Music was led by Beth, who is totally animated and fun. She was jumping and making faces and the children LOVED her. Of course, we had to jump around, too, just to keep up.



We divided into 2 groups. This time the boys all went to one side and the girls to the other. I had the boys line up and led them out with a "Chug-a-Chug-a-Woo-Woo". We must have gone around in that circle for 10 minutes and they were just having such a great time. It's the



little things...

Eric, Molly, and Morgan came out with balloons and started floating them and playing with them all. Eric also had long balloons and learned how to make balloon animals before the trip, so he was pretty busy with those. At one point he was buried in a sea of children, barely even visible.



Meanwhile, the girls were making beaded bracelets inside. I say the girls, but children and adults all made bracelets, and when we switched, the boys made them, too.

Like the fish pins the day before, they all wore their bracelets back the next day.

Thursday was our third and final day to visit our sister church in Chipel. After lots of preparation the night before, we were ready to make it a wonderful day.

We started out with a Ladies' Tea service. We prepared little goody bags for each lady with donations of lotions, soaps, bookmarks, stickers, hair clips and other knick-knacks. We laid out tablecloths with colorful plates, napkins, and cups. We had snacks and real tea as well. We are told that this was the first year real tea was served...they usually just serve Kool-Aid.



The ladies came in and took their seats. We started out with music and games. Dolores, the leader of our group, asked if I would share my testimony about Dad as many of the ladies here also have husbands, brothers, or fathers who have been incarcerated and/or were very ill, so that's what I did.



Afterwards, Mom also gave her side of the story. We are told there was not a dry eye in the place. Then we asked for prayer requests, and something amazing happened. Several ladies got up and said that they would pray for Mom and me and for my Dad's soul. They wanted to comfort us in our time of pain.



I honestly did not know how to react. Until then, I had believed that we were there to help and pray for them, not the other way around. That's when I finally understood the meaning and

significance of having a sister church. It is a mutual bond...we help and pray for each other. There is a personal relationship between us that binds us, under God our Father in heaven. My sisters in Chipel taught me a valuable lesson that day...one I will not soon forget, as I will not forget them, either.

After the tea, we were able to sit down and reflect on the events of the morning while we waited for lunch. A table was set for us in one of the buildings and we were brought a delicious chicken soup with noodles and



vegetables. We were told that this was considered to be a delicacy and reserved for only the most special occasions or visitors. Again, the loving and giving nature of the Mam people was astounding.

To the left are the wives of the three local pastors: Julia, Rosa, and Delfina. These ladies were the "welcome wagon", as it were, and were always making sure everything was just right.

Rosa's husband, Javier is the pastor at our sister church. Julia is Rosa's sister and her husband, Pablo, is pastor at a neighboring village. Delfina's husband, Misael, is Javier's brother and pastor at yet another neighboring village.



On to the last VBS. Today we had over 150 children show up. It was just amazing! Where did they all come from?! What a wonderful expression of God's love. We started with a puppet show about walking with God where Larry was worried that he had no legs to walk with, but Bob reassured him that hopping was just as good because it really wasn't literal

anyway.



After the puppet show, we had fun jumping around and singing some songs. Tim came up with his guitar and some of his harmonica students and played Amazing Grace. Those men had just picked up harmonicas for the first time

that morning while the women were in the tea. They were great! Tim kept saying how he wasn't a teacher, but God must have done some mighty teaching through him.



We went on to the craft, which was Walking With God. The night before, Eric, Hartley, and Tim had stayed up making little footprints across pieces of paper in different colors. They must have made 200 sheets of little footprints by using the outside of their fists. Each

child received a sheet with feet and wrote his or her name and "Walking With God" in Spanish. (Caminando Con Dios) Then they decorated the sheets with crayons, markers, and stickers. They had so much fun! And they were so happy and proud of their



creations that we had to take more pictures!

After VBS, we were taken to visit a local home. We had to climb up some pretty steep, muddy trails to get there. Once we arrived, we saw Irma (one of the ladies who was at the tea and said she would pray for Mom and I) and her daughter, Lesbia. They lived there along with Rolbin, Irma's son and Lesbia's brother. They were so proud to have us visit their home.



They lived in what had been a cattle corral, with aluminum siding for walls and a roof. They had one room with an open fire inside used for cooking and keeping them warm. They were happy. They had each other and they had their faith. That was enough.

We were later told that this family was one of the poorest in the area and that money had been donated to help them. They are going to be given 2 pigs: one to fatten up and take to market and the other for sustenance. In this way, they are taught how to fish and not just given fish for a day.

We thanked Irma and Lesbia for allowing us to visit them and headed back to the church. Along the way, two of the boys who called me by name, Daniel and Henry, held Diana and my hand and helped us get back down the hill. Bella was carried by her new best friend, Noelia, a girl of about 13. We had quite a procession on our way back to the church. Children were surrounding and holding hands with everyone on the team. You couldn't help but feel a sense of brotherhood and real joy.

Back at the church, the team had a final meeting with the leaders of the local church. The church leaders all expressed great gratitude and said they would love for us all to return. They feel a bond and a relationship with us and would like that to grow. We, in turn, reciprocated and thanked them for their hospitality and genuine love. We asked what they would like us to pray for and they asked for continued growth in the ministry and a cement floor in the eating area. We left them some supplies for continued teaching and ministry. Then, everyone got up and greeted each other, but this time there were some hugs as well.



As we exited the building and made our way to the van, many of us hugged, exchanged prayers, and wished to see each other again if God allows...if not here, then in heaven. It was beginning to rain, so we left quickly before the roads became too treacherous. We took Pastor Pablo and his family home along the way. We all talked about how wonderful everyone had been and how much we were going to miss them the whole way back to La Casa.

When we had our final bible study, Dolores asked us about God sightings and things that might change in our lives. Tim said that now that he'd started teaching them music, he couldn't just walk away, so he's going to do everything he can to continue that ministry. The Mariachi Brothers want to return, maybe with another member. Almost all of us agreed that seeing those bright, shining faces was a sighting of God. The relationships forged in those three days have changed us all forever, and we all hope to return to our sister church one day.

There are so many needs to be met that we hope to be able to continue our mission work with our sister church in Chipel. Something as simple as a de-worming pill every six months and some multi-vitamins to help supplement peoples' diets could make a huge difference. Finding a way of providing a clean water source could also make a huge improvement in their health and living conditions. Continuing the VBS ministry is also high on the list as these children will shape the future of their community. These are just a few of the things we have considered and hope to be able to address in the future.

Again, we would like to thank all of you for your prayers and support. We know that God has a plan for all of us and He puts people in our paths that will help us along the way. You have helped us help our church family in Chipel. We are grateful. God bless you all. Eric, Cary, Bella, Diana, and Carmen