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WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE GOING?

Coming Home by Debbie Gardner

Recently, I had the privilege of serving as a part of a mission team to minister to the women and children of the Diocese of Nebbi in northern Uganda. My partner and I—armed with material on God’s image of his daughters, self-esteem, forgiveness, and other women’s issues—led the first diocesan conference for women.

The moment I arrived in Uganda I was filled with such a peace and sense of coming home. I found the people to be committed to Jesus Christ and of great faith. They were some of the most hospitable people I have met, and I realized that the way they worship and praise the Lord calls the Holy Spirit to them.

I grew up on a farm, and I have a true love of the land. I had forgotten what it was like to live a simple life and had allowed the business of life and the American ideal of more is better to drive me. In the process and business of each day my faith, at times, has waned, and I have taken the credit for what has been given to me instead of thanking and praising the giver of every good gift, my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I set out to give to the women of Nebbi and in turn received so much more from them than I could have ever dreamed of offering them. I witnessed the Holy Spirit alive and moving in the Diocese of Nebbi, and my heart has remained there.

Upon my return to the U.S. I have watched my children and grandchildren and realize how in my efforts to give them the best I have cheated them of real living in God’s will. I have helped to perpetuate the belief that more is better and contributed to their being selfish and superficial. The people of Uganda have little to nothing in material possessions, but they have the fruits of the Spirit and are willing to share. There is much I can learn about living in simplicity and faith from these beautiful women who continue to smile so beautifully even in their pain.

(As a side note, I have been gritting my teeth for almost all of my adult life. In fact I have to sleep with a night guard. Most days my ears and jaws hurt from the constant grinding of my teeth. From the moment I arrived in Uganda until now I haven’t ground my teeth once. I guess I really did find the peace that passes all understanding. God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good.)

NEW MISSIONS DEVOTIONAL written by DWTX missionaries is now available. A suggested donation of \$6.00 helps cover cost of printing and postage.

The updated SHORT-TERM MISSIONS GUIDEBOOK is now available for downloading at our web site, dwtx.org.

A Letter from the Olsons in the Philippines

Dear friends, family, and co-workers for Christ,

We have been here in the tribe for a week now! This is no ordinary life, that is for sure! As I think about our purpose for being here, we feel inadequate for the task and that we can only rely on the Lord's guidance and protection while we are here. Right now we are focused on getting settled here so that we can press hard into language and culture study, so that one day we can teach the Gospel to these people.

We sent a sick baby out with a cleft palate by plane today, to be taken to the hospital. Her condi-

tion does not look good. She seems to also have malaria and has not been able to eat well for 2 months because of the cleft palate. We pray that she will soon be made well. This picture is the family that we sent out with their baby.



Thanks so much for your prayers! With language study, planning for our team meetings, making furniture, troubleshooting solar electric, and getting to know people, we are very much in need of your prayers!! Please pray especially that the Lord will keep these people alive until the day that we can present the Gospel of Christ to them!

In Christ,

Ginny and George Olson

<http://reachthetribes.com>

Burnout or Dehydration?

Someone who's been in world missions for decades recently wrote that he believes the ailment of so many in ministry is not burnout—it's dehydration, the weariness that saps our enthusiasm and depletes our energy. Of course, there are dozens of realities that keep us burning candles at both ends: deadlines, appointments, responsibilities, budgets, expectations... But *what if* intentionally making time for a deep drink of living water would bring the refreshment we need to serve with God-energy and renewed joy?

Oswald Chambers wrote that we need to practice "soaking" in God's presence—being still and knowing who he is and whose we are. Knowing our calling. Knowing his ability, bounty, and accessibility. Not just a quick sip from the source but luxuriating in his presence. "I will pour water on the thirsty..., and streams on the dry..." (Isa. 44:3)

DWTX has a great friend who, with his wife, takes one day a week to turn off his cell phone and spend the time waiting and listening to God. We've watched his ministry grow from obscurity to international prominence. Is it because of extraordinary charisma and talent or could it be that he understands the secret of getting quiet and drinking deeply? You decide.

In the meantime, give it a try. Find a quiet place and take time for a good drink of living water.

Update: How Your World Missions Dollars Are Being Used

Since 2003 every church has had the option of designating their apportionment giving to either the national church or to ministry outside the diocese (world missions). The Annual Diocesan Council confirms the amount that is assigned to world missions, and then an *ad hoc* committee made up of heads of various diocesan missions ministries meets and allocates those funds to be approved by the Executive Board of the Diocese. This year apportionment funds have gone to a number of programs or ministries in which our churches participate:

Northern Mexico

- Piedras Negras construction Iglesia Resurrection \$15,000
- Piedras Negras medical/dental vans (\$2,358.80) and tool kit (\$1,057.98) 3,417
- Water Ministry support vehicle 7,000

Southeast Mexico

- Diocesan multi-purpose building roof, bath, and kitchen 15,000

Honduras

- Siguatepeque birthing center 15,000
- Nueva Esperanza church and multi-purpose building 7,300
- One Laptop per Child Program, Siguatepeque 2,000
- La Ceiba medical/dental supplies 1,500
- La Ceiba educational program, La Chagas disease 1,500
- La Ceiba assistance to reopen clinic 1,000
- Rio Grande Valley medical mission 2,000

Russia/Belarus

- St. Petersburg, Russia, transitional homes 12,000
- Missionary support, Belarus 9,000
- Belarus camper fees (100 children @ \$150.00) 7,500

Uganda

- Hoima Diocese vehicle 10,000
- Nebbi scholarships for clergy children 8,000
- Nebbi Women's Centre staff salaries 4,500
- Missionary support 6,000

TOTAL FUNDING OF PROJECTS

\$127,717

Youth in Hong Kong

Amy Netek and Kymmi Lowe traveled to Hong Kong on a mission trip with about 20 other young people and 10 adults, all part of YWAM based in El Paso, Texas. This is an excerpt from their journal entries.

Our first week in Hong Kong we learned five dances to Christian songs and a Christian drama called “Journey.” We later performed in different churches, a drug rehab center, the night market, parks, youth groups, and any public place the “law” would allow as our form of outreach. After every program we had a time to talk to the audience and do evangelism.

During week three we went to a huge Christian gathering called Gateway Camp. The incredible thing about this camp was that people from over 57 nations were there. Out of 1500 people only 80-something were from North America. There were speeches, worship, workshops, and performances from all over the world. We performed a few of our dances representing the USA. After Gateway Camp, we had fellowship and worked with a local youth group at the Chinese YMCA Secondary School in Hong Kong. At the school, along with performing our program, we played games to grow relationships, helped teach English, and had small discussion groups.

In a society where ancestor worship and the belief in many gods are popular we were able to introduce a completely new concept: that there is only one true God and that he would love them no matter what. Because this was such a new concept for many people, we didn’t see lots of immediate responses. We realized, however, that that was not why we were there. We were there to plant seeds. Even if the people we were talking to didn’t immediately come to know Christ, we were at least able to plant in their minds the idea of the everlasting love that Jesus provides.

For both of us it was amazing to be in a solely Christian fellowship for a month. In a group of 22 Christian people where the ages varied from 14 to 49, we were able to really learn from those around us. Each one of us had something that we could share and provide to aid others in their walk and in turn we also were able to truly grow as a result of what others were teaching us. We both really gained an awareness of the power and control that God should have in our lives. He shouldn’t just be someone to call on when you need him. He should be a part of our everyday life through prayer and quiet times where you can truly ask him to be a part of every aspect of your life, good times and bad.

Amy Netek and Kymmi Lowe, St.
Mark’s, Corpus Christi

Hong Kong Mission Trip

6/24-7/28/08



Piedras Negras: A Tale of Two Missions

From June 8th through June 13, forty missionaries comprised of a team from St. Mark's, San Antonio, health care professionals, and other volunteers from all across the United States, journeyed to Piedras Negras, Mexico, to participate in a two-fold mission: to build a house for a local Piedras family that's never had a home to call their own and to serve the medical needs of the residents of Colonia Tierra y Esperanza, "Land of Hope," and the greater Piedras Negras area. Both sides of the mission trip were facilitated in large part by Constructores Para Cristo (CPC), the 21-year-old vision of Birmingham, Alabama, native Diane Davis, its founder. On their six day pilgrimage of service the group, many of them first time missionaries, learned that giving service to others in the name of the Lord Christ leaves those serving more richly blessed, it seems, than those who were intended to be served. (Next month, we'll feature Part II by Dr. Bill Smith.)

BUILDING A HOUSE, Part I, by John McClung.

Our team of eighteen never-done-this-before volunteers ranging from 15-75 years of age arrived at 418 Calle Unidad Monday morning at 7:30. We met Julio and Sylvia, together with their four children, the family for whom we had made this journey. Time to get started.

With constant support from Mateo, a bright, young Auburn graduate who has worked as a CPC staffer for several years, we set to work. First, the "block line," sort of like a bucket brigade, designed to get about 750 blocks from the back of the lot into position so that construction could begin. By the end of the first day we had laid eight courses of block about 5 1/2 feet high, poured reinforcing concrete, and left for our motel with a sense that what seemed impossible—building a house in five days—might just be something we could do.

It's worth noting that Julio and Sylvia's family had been living out in the open on a dusty lot for some time before we arrived, a necessary step to protect the building materials. They had been preparing for this day for many years by buying land in the colonia and faithfully paying off half their loan balance (a CPC requirement before a family can be considered candidates for a volunteer-built house). Beyond this, our family had demonstrated their good will by living a good life, avoiding trouble, remaining true to one another, and raising their children well. They desire the same things we do but simply lack most of the opportunities we have.

Day Two. Most of the concrete block was dry stacked one on top of the other. How could this possibly yield a sturdy house? Answer: SBC, short for Stucco Bonding Compound, a mixture that includes cement, fiberglass, and who-knows-what that binds everything together and makes it strong. It was a messy affair with a lot of on-the-job training. We ended the day by installing a front and back door and four windows in preparation for Wednesday.

Day Three saw us capping off the walls with a bonding beam filled with concrete and reinforcing steel rebar to make the house exceptionally strong and to prepare for the roof. We only worked half a day as the quantity of concrete we poured required extra time to set.

We were all apprehensive about Day Four. The roof was to be installed, lots of stucco work left to do including "chinking," or filling in a lot of odd-shaped voids with rubble, mortar, and plugs of concrete made from used water bottles our team had the neighborhood children fill each time a batch of concrete was mixed. To our amazement, at about 7:30 that evening we finished every detail of the job and went home with the promise of a festive dedication the next day, complete with Sylvia's homemade tamales. Before leaving the work site that night, we passed the keys to Julio and Sylvia's home from hand to hand of each worker declaring in Spanish, "With all our love," leaving our family to enjoy their home for the first time.

Words cannot describe our collective joy at the dedication. While each day's work started with prayers and readings in both English and Spanish, the dedication brought everything together. Joined by the medical team, CPC staff, and Diana Davis, we laughed, cried tears of joy, and celebrated. Oh, yes, we ate a lot of tamales and beans. We returned home exhausted but satisfied. I commend to everyone to occasionally "leave the village." Your eyes and hearts will be opened.

Dream Corners

Three years ago Tom Rickey (St. Thomas, San Antonio), a Christian Children's Fund sponsor, visited a resource classroom in Ecuador. The classroom had a small library stocked with 300 books that were used for reading and educational activities led by a student or teacher. When Tom observed how well the children learned and interacted in this self-motivated setting, he determined to get involved. Today, thanks to Tom, there are five teacher resource classrooms, or Dream Corners, assisting children in "Comprehensive Reading and Writing and Play and Learn to Think" programs. Relationships are being improved; children are motivated to learn; parents are encouraged to participate; and teachers learn techniques to improve children's learning abilities. Contact Tom Rickey (210-402-1512) for more information.

Showers of Blessing

Each month we will highlight an opportunity for you to shower a specific mission with prioritized gifts. This month we feature the need for uniforms for students at the girls' school in Gulu, Uganda. These girls are victims of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and are now being given the opportunity to attend school while receiving counseling/psychotherapy. For only \$10.00, you can provide a girl with a school uniform and open a door of hope. Our thanks to Linda Pate (Church of the Good Shepherd, Corpus Christi) for bringing this need to our attention. Please send your check marked "school uniforms" to: Diocese of West Texas, PO Box 6885, San Antonio, TX 78209, ATT: Betty Chumney.



Upcoming Mission Trips: Prayer List

July 31-August 9. HONDURAS. Water Ministry. Louis Manz (210-492-4482, lmanz@satx.rr.com) and Weldon Hammond, Team Leaders. Boy Scouts and TMI students; ESL; hygiene; children's programs. Maria & Anthony Byron III & Anthony Byron, Jr., Richard Corda, Kiersten Ellis, Jerry & William Fischer, Pamela Haines, Terry Hayes, Kathleen Manz, Arthur Meier, Janice & David Nichols, Barbara & Joseph & Robert & Walter Paulissen, Michael Pieprzica.

August 1-31 (weekends). MEXICO, PIEDRAS NEGRAS. ESL tutoring to youth at Buen Pastor. Judy Durbin, Sally Wiseman.

September 1-9. RUSSIA, ST. PETERSBURG. Russian orphanages. Mark Fowler, Team Leader (Christ Church, San Antonio).

October 16-25. HONDURAS. Water Ministry. Drilling, Hygiene. Curt Mowen, Team Leader (210-493-5057, ccmowen@satx.rr.com). *Need team members (Spanish speakers would be helpful.) Please phone or write Don Lee if you are called to work on the team traveling to Honduras (210-219-8585/cell; 830-460-4656).*

Nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer except those things outside the will of God.

—Streams in the Desert