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THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WEST TEXAS, WORLD MISSIONS

Where in the world are we going?

Fear and Loathing in Piedras Negras

by Greg Richards, Youth Minister,

Church of Reconciliation, San Antonio

On March 7, a small team of five left San Antonio and headed to Piedras Negras, Mexico. It was a short two-and-a-half-hour drive, but to hear the media talk about it, our team was risking life and limb to enter a battle zone. Mexico had been captured by drug lords and corrupt cops, and was allegedly on the brink of civil war. You can imagine our shock when we were greeted with a warm smile and bear hug by a Danny Devito-esque Mexican priest, Padre Miguel.

Padre Miguel is the priest of El Buen Pastor, a congregation that has grown exponentially. Its mission is very simple: tell people about Jesus and help whomever you can. This church stood in stark contrast to everything we had been prepared to encounter in Mexico. Where we were expecting to see pain, suffering and death, we instead encountered hugs, smiles and vibrant life. The whole time we kept thinking, these people live where we are afraid to go.

Our team spent four days in Piedras Negras building relationships in the church and digging a ditch that will be used to lay the foundation for an addition to the church. This added space will be used as a computer lab/ sewing center and will give El Buen Pastor even more ways to serve its city. We saw the living conditions of many of the poor, the dirt floors, the crate walls, no heat, and no water. Even these poor welcomed us. Rather than being angry or dejected, they were hopeful that perhaps these American Christians could help.

Maybe we can help. That question has haunted me since we returned to San Antonio. Maybe we can help. We should be able to. We have the means, the talent and the energy. But we are also gripped by fear. Unlike past years, the overwhelming response to this trip was, "Don't go, it's too dangerous." We took the media descriptions of violence to be gospel truth. We took general government warnings to be specific calls on our life. Maybe we can help. Maybe, but it is going to take trusting Jesus more than our local news anchor, and loving our neighbors more than we love our own safety. Maybe we can help. Our team prays that we can.

MAY 15 LUNCHEON BENEFITING WORLD MISSIONS. Ye Kendall Inn, Boerne, is the setting for a luncheon featuring special guest Rev. Marielena Cristerna (Redeemer, Eagle Pass, and El Buen Pastor, Piedras Negras) with mistress of ceremonies Catherine Lillibridge. Traditions Boutique will present a spring style show, and there will be a silent auction of limited, but unique, items. Reservations are \$50 per guest (\$30 is tax deductible) or \$500 for a table of 10. Transportation from the Bishop Jones Center is an additional \$15. A few seats are left for this lovely afternoon event. Call or email Marthe Curry (888/210-824-5387 or mcurry09@sbcglobal.net).

More Good News from St. Andrew's, Seguin

Please know that the Good News lives at St. Andrew's in a myriad of ways, and one of those ways is in our foreign mission work. Most importantly, those mission teams are not limited to the people who actually travel to Honduras, Mexico, etc. World mission is made up of people who have never stepped foot out of the country. They are the prayer warriors, cooks, marketing experts, furniture movers...and yes, the veterinarians, doctors, dentists, Spanish translators, public health workers, teachers, lawyers...and candlestick makers. They are all of us...we are the living Good News at St. Andrew's.

One of the greatest joys is to see the amazing dedication of people to mission who don't actually go on mission trips. Anne Galaway is a great example. She has never been to Honduras, but year after year she contributes hours and hours...days...weeks...to make mission trips possible. How does someone do that? Only in God's love and joy...In mission, the body of Christ is made manifest.

This year the Medical Mission will be comprised of five physicians, five dentists, translators, staff, and a full pharmacy which was completely funded by the monies raised at the St. Andrew's BBQ and Auction in February. One of the dentists will visit eight villages in four days with a portable dental chair and accoutrements. Usually, each doctor sees 85 patients a day. Angie De Los Santos: "Most significant is the relationships with the villages that you visit...especially with those patients that are referred to hospital in Tegucigalpa because the care goes beyond the physical. Right now, they are developing an organized process to find where they stay, where they eat, what transportation will they have, and much more..." Angie said she would like St. Andrew's to know that the support they provide enables a group from diverse cultures, many who meet for the first time, who are strangers to each other, to focus on living a purpose driven life.

Usually, the missionaries are the ones most changed by the mission. In one case, a Washington, D.C. veterinarian joined the team because of an article she read in one of the professional journals. When she started receiving information signed "In Christ," she wondered what that was all about. After going on two mission trips, she sold her practice and now takes veterinary teams to Central America full time. On one mission, two veterinary students politely refused the crosses that were offered at the airport. After two days with the group and listening to Michael Hoffman's words at the early morning "services" in the downtown plaza in Siquetepeque, they boldly asked for the crosses to wear. God works in these missions...

Speaking of veterinarians, the exciting news is that the Maternity Hospital that ministers to the poorest of the poor will be dedicated in May when the Veterinary Public Health Mission is in Siquetepeque. The veterinary teams usually vaccinate and worm about 6,000 animals. After the Public Health teams present their skits and puppet shows on basic sanitary habits (washing hands, brushing teeth), bags filled with new toothbrushes, soap, pencils, and more are distributed to the very young children in the mountain villages. Four thousand bags are being prepared for the teams that will go this May. This year each child will also receive a writing notebook, and at least three lap tops will be presented to the local school district along with other basic supplies.

May has been designated as Mission Month at St. Andrew's. Please contact Angie (angie5902@aol.com) to hear more about mission opportunities and how you might become part of one of their dynamic teams.

A Tiny Little Surprise by Kristin Chapman, missionary to Liberia

His mother died in childbirth. His father, with no means to buy formula, did his best with sugar water and coconut milk to keep him alive. At about one month of age, his father, believing he would die, brought him to an orphanage in Buchanan. The orphanage, also believing he would die, would not accept the child until a police report had been filed stating his condition. Amazingly, the child did not die. And, for that reason, they named him Surprise.

Surprise is now about nine months old. He was discovered by a social worker investigating another malnourished and small for his age. The orphanage cannot afford formula, so he eats what the other [older] children in the orphanage eat—rice.

Last week we received a phone call asking if we would foster Surprise. Surprise is not old enough to enter their facility, so they asked if we would be willing to foster him until he is old enough to enter Rafiki.

This past weekend I went to Buchanan (about a 2 1/2 hour drive from Monrovia) and met Surprise. He's a cutie and really captured my heart. Today I met with the Minister of Health and after having three social workers visit our house tomorrow, we should be ready to receive Surprise when he comes to Monrovia this weekend.



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asking if we would foster Surprise received by Rafiki village (an orphanage in many African countries). Unfortunately, they only take in children between the ages

Thanks for the Rag Dolls 2 Love Priscilla Gregory, Liaison to Casa Amparo

I write to thank the Women of the Diocese of West Texas for the gift of rag dolls. I work with Casa Amparo in Reynosa, Tamps., Mexico. It is truly a gift of love to give to these little girls that live at Casa Amparo. These girls come from the streets and are housed and given love by the nuns... I hope the warmth of their smiles reaches your heart.

Thank you...for your love to children you will never see but know that God is smiling on each of you.

Mission at St. David's, San Antonio Patricia Brooke

During April and May Christian Formation classes have been scheduled to focus on the ministries to which the congregation has been called. Included in these presentations: *Bread for the World* (Nancy Schweers), *Hands of Hope* (Brenda Kingery), *Lambeth Experience* (Catherine Lillibridge), *Honduran Mission* (Victor and Murray Mux), *Russia/Belarus Mission* (speaker TBD), and *ESL* (Sally Weisman and Sally Scurlock).

Keep a clear eye toward life's end. Do not forget your purpose and destiny as God's creature... Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take nothing that you have received... but only what you have given...

Francis of Assisi

Upcoming Mission Trips and Prayer List:

May 16-22. HONDURAS. Veterinary Team. Dr. Bill Campaigne, Team Leader. Rodger Kleisch, Randy Lynn, Victor Mux. Margaret and David Akers, Stephanie Arnold, James Dickson Bain, Jessica Bass, Casey Bolten, Lynn Campaigne, Eliab Chavira, Christina Cooper, Katherine Cummings, Christopher James Deuel, John Dodds, Gary Dood, Jeremy Grant Drollinger, Tara Fetzer, Peter Ford, Jennifer and Lindsey Goodwin, Michael Hoffman, Michele James, Sarah Jaquith, Sarah Elizabeth Junco, Amanda Lynn, Jane Malone, Megan and Lanster Martin, Kathleen Morriss, Erika Neeley, Emily Niemi, Therese Norris, Brenci Pation, Jessica Perry, Roslyn Reavis, Valerie Ann Rios, Laura Ronstadt, Angelina and Jon Schultz, and Jessica Seate. **Need working laptops, tooth brushes, combs, pens, pencils.**

May 21-30. HONDURAS. Water Ministry. Jack Martin & Louis Manz, Team Leaders.

May 30-June 1. TEXAS AND MEXICO (Brownsville & Matamoros). St. Mary's, El Dorado, AR. Rev. Chuck Sharrow, Coordinator.

June 4-8. MEXICO, Piedras Negras. Trinity (Victoria. Rev. Bur Dobbins & Kevin Dellaria, Team Leaders.

June-July (tba) UGANDA. Hands of Hope Tapestry Ministry. Helen Schnelzer & Brenda Kingery, Team Leaders.

June 7-14. HONDURAS, El Paraiso District, Ojo de Agua & Yuscaran. St. Andrew's (Seguin). Angie de los Santos, Team Leader.

June 10-17. HONDURAS. St. Helena's (Boerne). Medical/Dental.

June 10-21. HONDURAS, La Ceiba & El Pital. Medical/Dental. Elisabeth & Peter Englefield, Team Leaders.

June (tba). ZAMBIA, Gaali. St. Luke's (Cypress Mill). Evangelism & Education. Tommy & Connie Bye, Elizabeth & David Manning, Team Leaders.

June 12-18. HONDURAS, Siguatepeque. St. David's (San Antonio). School & Orphanage Ministry. Victor & Murry Mux & Vicky Goeber, Team Leaders.

June 18-29. UGANDA, Kampala & Hoima. Christ Church (San Antonio). Frances & John Harrison, Team Leaders.

June 20-27. MEXICO, Piedras Negras. St. Francis (Louisville, KY). Bobby Hausser, Team Leader.

June 20-August 20. RWANDA. Reconciliation Sabbatical study. The Rev. Robert Woody, Reconciliation (San Antonio).

June 22-July 4. INDIA, Diocese of Karimnagar. Good Shepherd (Corpus Christi). The Rev. Steve Bilsbury & Dr. Anantha Babbili, Team Leaders.

July 6-21. UGANDA, Nebbi Diocese. St. Luke's (San Antonio). VBS & Renovations. Elizabeth Allen, Team Leader.

July 7-29. UGANDA. SOMA Australia. Helen & Garry Schnelzer.

July 19-August 1. RUSSIA. Summer Youth Camp. Trent Timberlake, Team Leader.

PLEASE ALSO CONTINUE TO KEEP OUR LONG-TERM MISSIONARIES IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Alison Barfoot (Uganda); Harry Gunkel & Sharon & Duane Miller (Israel); Jeannie Loving (Honduras), Ginny & George Olson (Philippines www.reachthetribes.com); and Beth & Tony Price (Mexico).