

November, 2010

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EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WEST TEXAS, WORLD MISSION

Where in the world are we going?

Don't Bolt the Shutters on a Window of Opportunity

by JoAnn Dalgard, parishioner and freelance writer at St. Peter's, Brady

Imagine yourself in Paradise; more specifically, El Paraiso, Honduras. I believe some folks would rather take their chances playing in traffic blindfolded than consider going on a mission trip.

Maria J. Valdez and Dr. Pamela Haines, of Texas Water Mission, made a presentation to the congregation of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Brady, Texas. [We learned that] in 2002, the first group of volunteers went to drill wells; 49 have been drilled since. The project began as a response to the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Mitch in 1999; people were dying from lack of safe water.

As the project expanded, it became clear it was one thing to drill a well and entirely another to keep it clean. Many had poor hygiene habits; the same water where animals excreted waste was being used to mix up baby formula. Maria told us about her first trip. Knowing actual digging was beyond her area of expertise, she opted to work with the children, figuring her VBS (Vacation Bible School) experience would make it a breeze. Then she said how tired she was at the end of the day.

Addressing housing, Ms. Valdez said the group stayed at an agricultural school, Zamarano College, "the Texas A & M of Honduras." Having a safe place to come back to at the end of the day fortified the team for the next day's adventure.

Dr. Haines is a 30-trip veteran and works the health and hygiene aspect. Having the locals instruct their peers is key to success. Even the *alcalde* (mayor) got involved, which was a big step in this male-dominated society.

The purpose behind a water ministry is that [water] is vital; one needs it to live. It is also important to spiritual life in the sacraments of baptism and holy Eucharist. (During consecration of elements, the priest mixes water with wine. This represents the blood and water which came from Jesus' side. See John 19:34.)

"He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me." (Matthew 10:40 NIV). The people of Honduras receive the missionaries knowing that even if a well isn't brought in, knowledge is gained [in health and hygiene], and people reach out to one another in love.

Youth is not a requirement; there are people well into their 60s and 70s who make these trips. Maria Valdez said the team is not just the travelers. "There are goers, senders, and pray-ers." Or, as Lynda Fritts [wife of the Rev. Jonathan Fritts] puts it, "You can pray for one; pay for one; or be one."

Contact Maria Valdez (210-275-0575 or email maria.valdez@texaswatermission.org) for more information. When the window of opportunity is open, don't pull the blinds or bolt the shutters.

Empowering Women in Nebbi Diocese, Uganda

Ten years ago DWTX provided seed money to start a revolving bank for the women of Nebbi Diocese who wanted to save, borrow, or develop their own micro enterprises. Today that fund serves 130 organized women's groups that range from 15—25 members each.

In her latest report, Project Secretary Mono Carolyn listed achievements of the Women's Revolving Bank (WRB):

- It has increased church giving in parishes.

- The project has provided funds for medical care of mothers with HIV/AIDS.
- It has provided funds for widows to educate their children.
- It has improved the standard of living and income through sale of produce and fish.
- It has organized the women for sustainable development.



MONO CAROLINE WITH THE NEW COMPUTER PURCHASED BY DWTX



Bp. Benito Juarez and friends unloading relief goods provided by ERD during the recent floods in SE Mexico.

Upcoming Mission Trips and Prayer List

January 13-20. (Honduras) Patricia Perea, Team Leader. Manos de Dios Team.

Here are some prayer requests from our missionary to the Philippines, George Olson:

- That as our partners write the Gospel lessons, the message will be clear and the hearts and minds of the Palawano will be prepared to hear, understand, and believe.
- That our language study will progress smoothly and quickly, and we will learn to speak more clearly and effectively, as well as deepen our understanding of the language and culture.
- That our kids in Manila will have a good semester and have happy hearts, pressing on in good faith. Pray that they will both stay safe in their sporting endeavors, especially Isaac as he plays rugby.

Getting worms to eat from the coconut tree...

Missionary Jeannie Loving (Honduras) needs a 4x4 double cab diesel truck for roaming over the mountainous terrain. Let us know if you'd like to make a tax-deductible contribution of funds or a vehicle.

