

Our Dear Brothers & Sisters and Friends,

2012 November

This is a wonderful time of the year, not only for the holidays we celebrate, but also because we know that the cooler weather has brought clear skies and for those of you who like, delightful night time views of the heavens. We had a record low (since we have been here) of 49°F the other morning.

New Leadership

First of all, we want to express our appreciation and love for our elders, family, and friends at Maple Hill church of Christ who accepted our request to oversee our work when we first came to Honduras, and who continue to do amazing work with the many missionaries they oversee in foreign fields. We thank them for the five years that they have partnered with us in our service to our Lord and know full well that we would not have been able to accomplish what we have without their experience and encouragement. Especially our thanks go out to our liaisons, Reed and Tricia Thomas, who have spent much time and effort in helping things to run smoothly. However, we also understand their concern for their lack of time and resources to oversee our work more closely.

Therefore, we are very thankful for some wonderful news. The **Raleigh church of Christ** in Raleigh, NC has honored us by accepting our request to become our overseeing congregation. They already do much work here in Olancho, sponsoring several projects in the Amacuapa area, including continuing education for preachers, agricultural initiatives, and working with our dear friends, David and Suyapa Chacón. We are excited to be working with a group of elders who have shown their love for and desire for service in Olancho. We are grateful to Mac Safley, an elder at the congregation and a friend, who will be acting as our liaison. Note that in a like manner to Maple Hill, the Raleigh congregation is not supporting us financially.

Please remember to change our address to the following address for our 501(c)(3). When you send your checks in the future, please send them to:

The Least of These – Honduras
405 E. Dodge St.
Bryan, TX 77803

Thank you to all those of you who have already made the change to the new address. If you have any questions about the change of donation locations please do not hesitate to ask.

Thanksgiving Celebration

In honor of the day designated to praise and thank God for His many blessings, Joanne invited the women of her social group to join us for the noonday meal, along with Rebekah, Marcos, and Leyla Madrid, and our house girl, Yohana, who was an immense help with the mountain of dishes generated by the crowd. Rebekah cooked the turkey and made stuffing and gravy, and we ended with warm brownies and ice cream in place of pumpkin pie. How thankful we are that a time is set aside each year to remember that for which we are thankful. Of course, as Christians we live day by day in gratitude to our Creator and Redeemer, Who is forever praised. We continue to praise God and to thank Him daily for the many, many blessings with which He continues to shower us in our lives and ministries here in Catacamas.

Women of Purpose Renewal

As mentioned in previous newsletters, what has become the highlight of Joanne's year is the Women of Purpose Renewal that is hosted twice annually by a group of North American ladies from the Ohio/West Virginia area. It is 3-5 days of praise and worship in English, great Bible lessons, prayer clusters, devotional stations, free food, fellowship, and chocolate. The event was hosted both times this year in the Valley of the Angels and the entire event is free for the N.A. missionary women living and working in Honduras. Last November Joanne and Lydia met Vicki and Jamie Orr, another mother and daughter set, who were in the same cabin. Since that time we have become good friends with the Orrs, visiting their home and having them in ours, even though they live two hours away. God does indeed work all of His plans to the benefit of His children.

The Ladies Make Jewelry

The last weekend in October, Jamie Orr, visiting her parents in Guaimaca from FL., came to the community of San Isidro



Jaime loves to teach.

to teach 14 ladies how to make jewelry to give them yet another marketable skill. Jamie was able to pay for her round trip airfare to Honduras last year through funds earned selling the jewelry she made. All thoroughly enjoyed the lessons and everyone got to take home the free pair of earrings they made. At least two of the women have taken up the art of jewelry making to sell as a result of Jamie's class and others have shown an interest in doing the same. We cannot sufficiently thank Jamie, nor her parents, for their time, their help, and their love in caring for these ladies whom we love.

Trouble in San Isidro

Most of our report recipients do not know that the younger brother of the preacher of the San Isidro Church of Christ was murdered last month by a fellow police officer in the capital city of Tegucigalpa. The preacher here, Lidio, has made no small noise about his discontent with the manner in which the police handled, or rather did not handle, an investigation into the blatant murder of an officer known for his honesty and integrity. Last week, three pistol-toting men arrived in San Isidro with a photo of Lidio, looking to kill him, presumably commissioned by those who shot his brother. By God's design, Lidio's family had moved only two months earlier, out of the church classroom where they had lived for almost four years. Also by God's great providence, Lidio was not even in the state of Olancho when the men were looking for him, but returned from visiting his father on Wednesday night. Upon the advice of several brothers from the church, Lidio has since left Olancho, with his family to follow after his two daughters complete high school on Dec. 21st. In the meantime, another brother has taken up the baton of preaching for the congregation until a full time preacher can be found. We ask your most fervent prayers for God's protection over the thisfamily, His guidance in finding a new preacher, and His will in all situation related to the community and the church.



Rigoberto and two of his three assistants, Olvin and Melvin

Dwight goes to Prison

Ever since we first started coming to Honduras in 1996, we have known Rigoberto Vargas and his wonderful work in the prisons of Honduras. This December will mark 25 years of Rigo's successful work of changing lives for those incarcerated. For more than 10 years he has been asking Dwight to teach computer classes to his charges. This year Dwight finally felt that his language skills were sufficient and decided to help as soon as finals were over at the school in Por Los Niños.

For the last 2 weeks he has been teaching, and loving on, his new students in the National Penitentiary in the Valle de Tamara just north of the capital city of Tegucigalpa. He has returned for one final week this week and will be met by Joanne on Friday so that they can celebrate with the new Baxter Institute graduates on Saturday, the 1st of December.



Prisoners from Cell Block Diagnostico learning about the innards of a computer.

Leader's Meeting

Every three months the leaders and preachers for the churches get together at different congregations to have good singing, lessons from the Bible, and announcements of general interest to all of the congregations. This quarter the meeting was delayed a month because the host preacher was in the hospital. The meeting was held at Jobo Manto (about two hours from Catacamas) and was attended by members of about 20 congregations.

Container - Good News/Bad News/Good News

The good news is that so many churches and individuals made Magi Boxes (shoe boxes full of gifts like brushes, school supplies, and toys) for the poor children in Honduras, that Healing Hands was able to fill up three 40' containers to send. We are so very thankful for the hearts, hands, and pocketbooks that make Christmas special for the little ones here. The unfortunate news for us was that the part of the 3rd container that was empty was filled with the Magi Boxes rather than our supplies. No problem! And that means that if you have found some other items that you want to send us, let us know. We are always looking for computer equipment, used cameras, cell phones (with chargers) that can accept a SIM card, soaps, shampoos, tooth-brushing supplies, and school materials.

Prayers:

Please pray with thanksgiving for the elders at Raleigh church of Christ. May they help us to serve in a way that honors our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Please continue to pray for Lidio and his situation. Pray for Dwight's work in the prisons. Always pray that our Lord may be glorified in all that we do.

Thank you all for the blessing you have been to us and to all those here in Catacamas, Olancho, Honduras.

We love you, Dwight & Joanne Tomkins

Snapshots of Honduras - insect and weed control

Do you have chickens? We find them invaluable in our living in Honduras. They eat many of the bugs that plague our area. Not only that but Dwight has not had to mow the grass since we have had sufficient chickens to keep it trimmed (though he does need to clip some weeds for which the chickens don't particularly care). We would turn on the yard lights at night and Dwight had trained our rooster, Chuck, to wander around the yard snacking on leaf-cutter ants. Unfortunately Chuck liked to 'sing' all night long so he ended up, as one of our friends said, as 'Chuck suey'. After we lost Chuck, our 2 hens did not lay any longer for a time, but now they are laying one or two delicious eggs every day.



Betty laying an egg in our outside stove. We don't think she understands the purpose of a stove.



Photo left out of last month's issue. People from San Isidro digging clay out from the side of a hill to use to coat the ovens.