



... Partnering with the Holy Spirit to empower Mexican people to grasp all of God's full purpose

Dennis and Lucy Smith, missionaries to Mexico

www.ManosdeDios.org

August 2008 Newsletter

School Uniform Distribution a Success!

Children in Mexico are required to wear a uniform to attend school. Each school dictates the colors for their required uniforms, so they are all different! Many families struggle to come up with enough money to purchase uniforms (shirt, skirt or pants and black shoes) for their children. Thanks to MANY generous donations, Manos de Dios provided **complete uniforms** for **186 children**. We were also able to provide shirts and/or pants for many more children. What a blessing this was to so many families!

The local evangelical pastors participated by identifying up to twelve children from their church and neighborhood who would not be able to attend school without assistance purchasing a uniform. They gave them a signed 'ticket' to present at the uniform distribution day. Early Saturday morning, families began lining up outside the youth building of Compañerismo Cristiano de Peñasco church. We served lemonade and fellowshiped with the families while they waited to be escorted in. Many families had walked to the church to be able to receive uniforms for their children. A couple pastors brought families that could not get there any other way. Many families were noticeably poor, hot & sweaty, and undernourished.



Inside, we had tables covered with donated gently used pants, shorts and skirts; gently used and new polo shirts; gently used shoes; backpacks; and school supplies. The volunteer helpers received their instructions... Take one family at a time around to help them pick out 2 shirts, a pair pants or a skirt, shoes (while they lasted), a backpack (while they lasted) and school supplies. Pray a blessing over the



family and encourage the children as they begin a new school year.

Each family appreciated the personal attention, love and encouragement given them. The children were precious as they stood tall while shirts and pants were held up to them to 'check the fit'.





Many children shyly picked out a backpack and wore it proudly out the door. “Dios te bendiga” (God bless you) was repeated over and over as the families circulated around the room for each item.

The volunteers noted what parts of a complete uniform were provided and what was lacking for each child. At the end of the day the pastors came to the church and were given pesos in an envelope labeled for each child that needed additional parts of their uniform (most needed shoes, some needed the appropriate color pants and shirts). The pastor agreed to guarantee that the money would be spent only on uniforms needs and to return the receipts as an accountability tool.

What a powerful way to help meet an immediate need for these families. What a powerful way to show God’s love in a tangible way. As we prayed blessing and prosperity over the families we expressed the expectation that they will work hard, make good choices this year, and not need a helping hand next year!



The four local women (shown here left to right Ery, Margarita, <Lucy>, Gloria and Pili) volunteered their time to help with this distribution. They expressed how much they were blessed to be a part of God’s blessing.

Thank you to the Ortega family for driving down to Mexico to transport uniforms and backpacks and to help with the distribution day! Thank you to all who donated money to purchase uniforms and who donated gently used uniforms. May God richly bless you!



Meet Armando and Diana

Armando and Diana have been dedicated Christians for about 8 months. As soon as they accepted Christ they got married in the church and committed their family to God. They have two children, Brianda 6 and Diego 1 ½. Armando has a rocky past including struggles with drug addiction and a divorce. Armando and Diana live in a small house (2 room) on her mom’s property in the city of Puerto Peñasco. They dream of the day they can begin building their own home on a piece of property they own in the ‘invasion’ area on the outskirts of town. It is difficult to save enough money to get started. Armando’s job is to approach tourists to invite them to local resort to hear the spiel about timeshares. He gets paid when someone shows up for the appointment.

Diana is a stay-at-home mom. They teach Sunday School and attend leadership training classes at Compañerismo Cristiano de Peñasco church. They are meeting regularly with a mature couple in the church to help strengthen their marriage.

One of the primary reasons they want to move out to their property and have their own home is to move away from the influence Brianda's grandmother is having on her. She is not a believer and uses foul language. Brianda is picking up the language and is in an unwholesome environment when she spends time at her grandmother's home next door to their house.



The Rock of Sahuarita Church is partnering with Manos de Dios to finance and build a home for a family in October. God directed us to Armando and Diana and they will receive the new home on their property! Everyone is excited. Armando and a group of volunteers will lay the foundation for the house before the Rock Team comes down to Mexico. Armando will add some of their saved money to the Rock's funds to increase the size of the concrete foundation so he can add on to the home in the future. The Rock Team will travel down to Mexico on a Sunday afternoon, after having a dedication and send off at their worship service. They will camp together and work at building Armando and Diana's home for 2 ½ days. We will also put on a children's outreach in

the neighborhood near the new home one afternoon. We'll include photos of the new home in our October newsletter. Please cover this family and this new home with your prayers.

For His Kingdom, Lucy
Lucy@ManosdeDios.org

Visit to El Diamante and Desemboque

A few days before our trip to El Diamante and Desemboque we could see the storm clouds off to the south in their area and even felt very high winds in Peñasco. One night the wind was so strong in Peñasco that I had to get up at 3am and tie down the awning on our RV before the wind ripped it off. It took over an hour and a lot of sweat to get it secure.



Tuesday we headed south with \$300.00 worth of food for the food bank in Desemboque and some needed donations. Pat and Gerri had not traveled with us to visit the pastors for some time so we asked them if they wanted to go with us and they accepted. The drive down is always a great time to get caught up on what is going on in the communities and with each other.

About two thirds of the way to El Diamante, there is a small community in the farming area. Off to the left was a house that had about three feet of water running right through it! Then we saw a head sticking up out of the water that was flowing down the street. There was a kid floating down the street being carried by

the current. He was not in danger. He was having fun! The water in that area had to be four feet deep and flowing like a river. Seeing all this water made us wonder what El Diamante would be like!

We found out. The dirt road to El Diamante was a river. I put my Ford into 4-wheel drive and started following another vehicle down the river but only went about a half mile. Water was ready to come thru the doors so I decided to turn around and try to get out. We tried three other ways to get to El Diamante via grape fields, dirt paths and a secondary road. I decided to forget getting into El Diamante that day and to go on to Desemboque. The road is paved all the way until you get to the edge of town and the dirt streets in town are OK and do not flood.



When we arrived in Desemboque we stopped at pastor Ruben's house (one room added to the back of the church). He was working in the fields so we visited with his wife Erika and dropped off the donations for the food and clothing banks. We were instructed to come back at 6pm when Ruben would be home and to have dinner with them. We did as instructed and we also were served breakfast the next morning.

During our conversations and prayers, Erika asked us to pray for the women in the church (to end the gossip and bickering), a better place for them to live (the 4 of them live in one room about 10X25 feet), and continued growth in the church. Her requests and prayers always

include tears. Tears of joy because she is so grateful for their blessings from the Lord. And tears of sadness because she desires so much to do God's will and assist her husband with the ministry while being challenged with problems within the church and not knowing how to handle them. We would like to spend more time with them praying and mentoring; however our financial status right now does not permit it. Manos de Dios is sponsoring two educational/spiritual conferences this fall in Peñasco that should be beneficial to them and their ministry.

The next day we went back to El Diamante and were able to get in and out of town (barely) via 4-wheel drive back roads and fields. As usual, our visit with Pastor Alfonso was fruitful. He advised us that we do not have to give them as much money or food for the community food bank because people in the community are working (a mine is employing more, the olive and grape fields provide lots of jobs, and many people take the bus to the Mayan Palace outside of Peñasco to work) and can purchase their own food! What a blessing. However, we will continue to provide funds to help those in desperate need and emergency situations (we gave them \$200 this trip). The financial support we give them will be used for other needs in the community. Pastor Alfonso is a pastor that thinks and responds by asking what would Jesus do and then acts on the answer given to him by the Holy Spirit. He is a good steward of the money they are blessed with, careful not to enable and pray for direction on how Manos de Dios can assist them in spreading the word of God to their community and beyond. Lucy and I see the need for additional *animo* (encouragement) and assistance to the pastors in El Diamante and Desemboque. Please pray with us for additional funding so Manos de Dios can continue to undergird and assist the pastors and their churches grow and spread the word of our Lord!

Dios te bendiga, Dennis
Dennis@ManosdeDios.org

As we were praying about revising our Manos de Dios vision statement, we were reminded (again) of the perfect plan and purpose God has for each of our lives. We love this verse and felt led to incorporate it into our vision.

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:11-13

Vision statement for Manos de Dios:

Partnering with the Holy Spirit to empower Mexican people to grasp all of God's full purpose.

Snap Shots from our Trip...by Dennis Smith

Bible study at the prison, men's section You can prepare for the study program, you can prepare for the message and for the sharing of lemonade and bread. One thing you can't prepare for is the heat and humidity you will encounter when you get behind those solid block walls. The heat and humidity is so high, when you come out you are soaked and we are in an outside courtyard! I can't imagine what it must be like in the cell blocks (Lucy will have to tell about that experience – because that's where she holds the women's Bible study). When I first started going into the prison about three years ago I was prepared for the on slot of men coming up to me with a laundry list of "can you bring me's." What I was not prepared for was that the begging did not happen and never has! Yes, there have been times when someone asks for something (only about three times this year) and I am pleased to say it was a reasonable request. I don't mind when the man wearing a size 7 tennis shoe asks if there is a way I could bring him a size 8 ½ pair, his actual shoe size. Or the man asking for a sweatshirt in the winter when he comes to the Bible study wearing only a tee shirt. These requests I do not mind and will try to honor.

I find the (on average 40 to 50) men that come to the program to be polite, friendly, attentive to the message, and willing to participate. I personally visit with the men that speak English. We talk about Jesus and life. I ask about their family and I tell them I will pray for them and their families. I also ask them to pray for my struggles and me.

I consider it a blessing that God has allowed me the opportunity to be able to go into the prison and fellowship with these men. And I pray that we are making a difference in their lives.

Single moms When we get to Peñasco Lucy becomes like a mother hen taking care of her chicks and it is a wonderful thing to see and hear. Lucy loves to invite her female friends to visit us at our trailer (which usually means picking them up, preparing a meal for them and then take them to the grocery store on their way home). On this particular day our friend Margarita and daughter Alejandra got a ride to our place from her friend, Ery. Margarita brought her sewing machine to take advantage of our air conditioning as she sewed school uniform blouses for a customer. She has started a sewing business with the sewing machine we donated to her. Lucy helped create a business card on our computer for her business and printed business cards to help her market her services. (see business card here...)



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That afternoon Margarita listened as Lucy answered Ery's questions about scripture and prayer. As I sat in the other room reading the Bible and studying I could not help relating what was going on between Lucy and our new Christian friends in the other room to what the teachers must have done after the Resurrection. Servants of the Lord, fellowshipping and sharing His Word with others on a personal level! Needless to say I was very proud of her!

Items transported and donated August 2008

- Appliances; Washer, dryer, freezer
- School uniforms; 300 children's gently used uniform pants, shorts, jumpers, skirts, 15 pair of children's shoes, 155 gently used uniform shirts (white-red-blue), 308 new white uniform shirts, 2 cases of school supplies, 150 notebooks, 46 backpacks and \$3,000.00 to spend on new uniforms
- 2 bags women's clothes
- 1 bag men's shoes
- 2 bags men's work shirts
- \$500.00 worth of food for 2 community food banks
- 2 bags sheets, pillowcases, blankets, and 1-bag towels
- 1 box bi-lingual children's books
- 1-Childs dresser

The appliances found homes with needy families, the women's clothing went to the clothing bank in Desemboque, the men's shoes went to the prisoners, and the miscellaneous items went to local churches to be distributed as needed.

Again, Lucy and I thank you for your physical donations. They are a true blessing because most of the items that are donated are just what is needed at the time we are ready to take them to Mexico. God sure has perfect timing, doesn't He?

On a personal note:

Dennis: I'm currently reading The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert E. Coleman and am enjoying it very much. If you are the type of person (like me) that appreciates books that relate directly to scripture this is a good book for you. It is a short book, too!

Lucy: I'm currently reading The Rewards of Fasting by Mike Bickle and Loving God's Way by Gary DeLashmutt. I'm currently praising and worshipping to *House of Worship* by Twila Paris and *Sound of Melodies* by Leeland.

God is teaching me to be consumed with a passionate love for Him. I am focusing on the *one thing* (for those of you familiar with International House of Prayer and the ministry of Mike Bickle, this will sound familiar), seeking to love God with all my heart. As David declares in Psalms 27...

One thing I ask of the LORD,
this is what I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.

Psalms 27:4

Praise Report:

The Mexican Constitution has been amended to state that the accused are presumed innocent. (The opposite has always been true-that the accused are presumed guilty.) It is estimated that it will take about seven years for the old system to be changed to incorporate this new policy.

Prayer requests:

- For the prison ministry: That God would raise up leaders among both the men and women in the Bible Studies within the prison walls.
- Angela & Jafet: single mom and 7 month old son traveling to Honduras by bus to share Jesus w/ her family.
- Unity between all the churches (and their pastors) in Sonora, Mexico.
- The citizens in Mexico to band together to stand up to crime and violence.

Manos de Dios Events Calendar:

- Sendas Antiguas (Ancient Paths) Conference in Spanish: Puerto Peñasco Oct. 10 & 11. Please pray for the pastors and church leaders and their spouses that will be attending this conference. (For more info go to www.familyfoundations.com)
- Medical Clinic in the Prison: Date TBA in October or November
- The Rock of Sahuarita builds a home for Armando and Diana: October 12-15
- Amor Missions Rocky Point House Building Trip: November 6-9. The Los Niños team, led by Lucy and Dennis, ministers to the children and mothers in this barrio in a VBS type outreach.
- LifeWind Visions Seminar: December 5 & 6. Pray that all those interested in community development will attend this conference in Puerto Peñasco. Two missionaries from Zihuatanejo, MX will be coming to lead the seminar.
- Posada in the Prison: Tentatively planned for December 13th. Volunteers needed to provide pies to feed 400+ people for this Christmas party in the prison.

Manos de Dios encourages and empowers families, pastors, prisoners and communities in Sonora, Mexico. We are trusting in God totally to provide for our needs and the needs of those we reach out to. Please consider partnering with Manos de Dios, a 501 c 3 not-for-profit corporation. Your tax-deductible donations will have ETERNAL value as they impact lives for Christ in Sonora, Mexico! Donations can be made on our website www.ManosdeDios.org or with checks made payable to Manos de Dios, NFP. Contact us for our mailing address and/or online banking donation information.

Contact us: GetInvolved@ManosdeDios.org or 520-975-7356

