

December 2007 Newsletter

(This newsletter was originally sent out in an email format.
For archive purposes it has been converted to a .pdf file.)



Manos de Dios

...being God's hands and feet in Sonora,
Mexico

www.ManosdeDios.org



Pastor's Conference in El Diamante, Sonora. Sponsored by Manos de Dios.
Saturday, December 1, 2007.

Pastor Tim Coop teaches. Missionary Pat Translates.

Due to the huge amount of rain that fell Friday day and night, many of the roads in the surrounding areas were flooded. Unfortunately, many of the pastors that had planned to attend the conference could not get to El Diamante Saturday. The teachers of the conference, Pastor Tim Coop, Pastor Stan Tedrow and Luciela Puralta were all able to arrive safely. The conference started very late as we waited for as many to attend as possible. Menudo was served for breakfast while we waited. At 11am we began with Praise and Worship led by the band from the church in Ygriega. Pastor Stan spoke, with Gaby Lugo translating, to the men about finances. He shared personal stories of challenging times in his life. He encouraged the pastors to save, tithe and be very careful with credit. Meanwhile, Luciela spoke to the group of wives about communication. Her sense of humor, genuine spirit and honest sharing won the hearts of the women. They were encouraged to communicate with their Lord, their

In This Issue

Pastor's Conference in El Diamante

Baño at Campo Animo

Posada in prison

Upcoming Activities/ Needs

For more info about Mexico plus photos go to our website...even donate online!

www.ManosdeDios.org

First time to see our Manos de Dios newsletter? [Join our Mailing List!](#)

husbands, their children, the church members and those in their community. Luciela offered a prayer of blessing over each woman as their session drew to a close. All re-united in the church sanctuary for an inspiring talk by Pastor Tim Coop, with Pat Rico translating. He spoke with **I Timothy 4:14-18** as his text. He encouraged all to "set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (I Tim 4:12b). He covered extremely important topics for the leaders of churches. The conference concluded with all being served a delicious meal of shrimp chop suey (believe it or not!) Pastor Alfonso and Angelita did a wonderful job of hosting the conference and cooking the meals. We plan to offer more pastors conferences in the coming year. This is a vital way of under girding the indigenous evangelical pastors (one of Manos de Dios key missions). Another leadership training conference is planned for Spring 2008 and an Ancient Paths conference (in Spanish, of course) is being planned for October 2008.

Baño built in the rain at Campo Animo



As we prepared to go to El Diamante to hold our first pastors' conference we had no idea what obstacles would await us! El diablo was surely going to try to interfere with God's plan.

On Wednesday November 28th Eric and I loaded up my trailer with donations, supplies for the conference and lumber to build a baño on Campo Animo. We planed to leave first thing Thursday morning.

Thursday, Lucy uno, Eric and I got through the border crossing and through the customs checkpoint without any problems and made it to El Diamante before dark. We had plenty of time to unload the supplies and attend a prayer service (prayers for the conference and its attendees) at church that evening. We were also able to give Pastor Alfonso two (used) bicycles for their teenage sons. The boys had just asked their mother for bicycles. She had told them to pray about it. When they received the bikes they were very excited

and said, "Boy, God answers prayers quickly!" We had a wonderful day and no challenges, yet!

Friday morning while Eric and I started getting the supplies ready to build the baño and wait for our fellow construction workers, Pat and Allen to arrive it turned cold, windy and started raining! It rarely rains in El Diamante! Pat & Gerry and Allen & Lucy tambien arrived soon afterward and it started raining harder. To make a long story short it rained for 14 hours! It had not rained that long and hard in recent memory according to the locals. To build the baño we had to put up a tarp so we could keep the generator dry while we cut the lumber. The generator stayed relatively dry but we were soaking wet all day. We were not discouraged and did not give up!

That evening the seven of us were able to eat dinner in shifts (our trailer was not made to house seven people). We had a great time of fellowship and laughter while listening to the wind and rain. About 8pm there was a knock at the door and Ramon (the son of our property caretaker) invited us outside to see something. We put trash bags over our heads and followed him out. He pointed out that the formerly seven foot tall outhouse (located between our trailer and their adobe house) had sunk into the ground and was now only



about three foot tall! The hole it was sinking into had spread from two feet to over five feet in diameter. Another major concern was that the hole was expanding and heading for the right rear wheel of my truck! The other two vehicles parked next to me were stuck in the mud and there was no way to move anything. We had to wait it out and hope and pray for the best. While we were out in the wind and rain we noticed that the road in front of our place had turned into a three to four foot deep river and was moving very fast! We prayed for the safety of all those traveling to the conference early the next morning and that the baño hole would not get any bigger! All we could do was to go back into the trailer and dry off. We were trapped so the seven of us (plus one dog!) slept in our trailer. Again, we did not become discouraged. The Lord was on our side, He would protect us from harm, and we would

accomplish the task in the way He had planned.

Saturday morning came and the rain had stopped, my truck was still on solid ground and the water in the road had resided. PTL! By mid afternoon we had the baño built and the toilet installed (no water to flush it, though, and no door on the building- just minor concerns). And we were able to get the vehicles out of the yard. We were relieved and invigorated!



New baño...just in time!

¡Vaya con Dios!

Dennis

Posada (Christmas worship service and meal) in prison, Puerto Peñasco December 1, 2007

(No photo available. The guards did not let us take a camera into the prison)

Matthew 25:36 "I was in prison and you visited me, I was hungry and you gave me something to eat." That was our goal for this mission trip, to feed and visit the men and women in prison in Puerto Peñasco Mexico.

The trip down started off cool and very, very foggy here in Tucson. In addition to all the food and pies we already had, we stopped off in Sahuarita to pick up 40 more pies donated by the members of The Rock Church (for a total list of donations see the donation list) and continued on our way. It was a beautiful morning. The clouds and fog covering the mountains and roadways was not something we get to see very often in the Tucson area.

At the Mexican checkpoint we had a little explaining to do as to why we were carrying so much food and clothing donations. We were told if we wanted to bring in donations without paying an import tax, we would have to be pre-approved by the DIF office in Puerto Peñasco. The word donation was immediately changed to gifts! We were then able to pay 190 pesos (about \$19) import tax on the gifts and cross the border.

Life group members Paul and Vicki arrived Thursday morning to help us and the crew was ready to start cooking. Paul, Pat and I were able to deep fry 12 (23 to 25 pound each) turkeys in seven hours. Lucy (uno) Gerry, Vicki and a few kids had the job of pulling the meat off the bones and chopping it up. The posada meal was to consist of turkey macaroni salad (see recipe below), refried beans (purchased and prepared by local women), bread, pies, coffee and lemonade. Friday, the potatoes were cooked and all the ingredients were chopped and mixed in to make the salad. That was a chore! The salad filled 4 large rubbermaid tubs!

Saturday morning we arrived at the prison with enough food and utensils to feed 450 people, 200 chairs, 10 tables, and the five-piece band equipment and sound system. I was able to pull my truck and trailer onto the prison grounds to unload (after it was thoroughly inspected....They even looked under the hood of the truck!)

After setting up, the men, women and guards started coming out onto the courtyard in an orderly fashion. There was praise and worship singing provided by a local church band, a testimonial given by a former prisoner that had turned his life over to the Lord, a message provided by a local pastor, prayers by several people and then it was time to eat. This is the *one time* each year all the prisoners hear the **Gospel Message** loud and clear. (The weekly Bible Study is attended by only 60-80 men.)

As the many Mexican and American volunteers served the meal there were many heart felt "Feliz Navidad" and "muchas gracias" said by the prisoners to the volunteers. There was more than enough food for everyone and some of them even got to take leftovers back to their dorms. The variety of choices of pies was a hit and they got to have seconds of dessert also. At the end of the posada there was a large piñata that some prisoners got to take a swing at and then when it broke, they were treated to the candy that fell out. Lucy was able to sit and fellowship with the women prisoners that attend her bible study - her favorite part!

It was a blessing to us to be able to serve and visit with God's children. We were treated with respect and consideration by all the prisoners and never felt threatened in any way.

We are blessed and thankful to see how God has worked in the heart of the non-believer Commandant to allow us to minister to the prisoners in so many ways. What a blessed day it was. Thank you, Lord! And thank to all who donated pies, socks and finances to purchase turkeys!

Sunday afternoon Lucy and I were able to visit a sister in Christ that had fallen away from church lately. We were able to invite her and her children to church Sunday night to see the children's Christmas program and she accepted. And what was more heart warming was that the people in church welcomed her with open arms and hugs!

The rest of Sunday and Monday morning was spent visiting friends and other people in immediate need. We were able to deliver blankets, winter clothes, shoes and food to people in desperate conditions.

Manos de Dios assists Amor Rico Ministry with a Monday afternoon prison Bible study program. Again, there is praise and worship, a testimonial, prayers and a message given (by local men). Afterwards the men are treated to fresh lemonade and bread. The Christian brothers were given small Christmas presents of socks, toothpaste, toothbrushes, a drinking cup and a razor. Bibles are available to anyone that wants one at any time. The biggest smiles were brought on when I handed out reader glasses to some of the older men whose eyes were so bad they could not read their Bible anymore.

"When you did it to the least of these, you did it to me." Lucy and I can not explain the wonderful feelings we receive when we are able to serve in the manner Christ calls us to serve. We want to thank all the volunteers and people that donate money, food, clothing and other items that make it possible for us to carry out our mission. We could not do it without your support.

¡Dios les bendiga! Dennis

Prison Posada Turkey Salad: Clean whole, thawed turkey. Sprinkle with seasoning salt or creole seasoning. Fry in peanut oil in turkey fryer (75 minutes at 400 degrees for 22 pound turkey). Cool turkey. Cut meat off bones into cubes or shreds. Cook elbow macaroni noodles. Peel and cube potatoes and carrots. Cook until soft. Dice celery. Combine turkey, noodles, potatoes, carrots, celery, salt and pepper. Add mayonaise until moistened. Immediately before serving add chopped lettuce and more mayonaise, if needed. Serve chilled with refried beans.

Upcoming Activities. Needs List.

Saturday, January 19th Medical Clinic in the prison in Puerto Peñasco. Please **PRAY** for our doctors and translators as they treat the ill prisoners and mentor the prison doctor. **NEEDS: \$400 to purchase medicine in Mexico for treatment of prisoners.**

February 7-10. Dennis and Lucy travel to Huatabampo, Sonora. We will be transporting Pastor Alfonso and his wife Angelita (they do not have a reliable vehicle) to a training conference and to pick up training materials. Angelita will be holding Sunday School Teachers training conferences in many small communities in northern Sonora using the information and materials she receives. Please cover us in **PRAYER** as we make the 8 hour trip to and from Huatabampo. **NEEDS:** Angelita will be helping to fund their expenses to travel to these small communities by selling Sunday School supplies and clown costumes (that she makes) to the small churches. She needs *(new) children's scissors, glue sticks, pencils, pens, coloring books, water color paints, brushes, face paint and tissue paper sheets.* Please donate items or designate funds (www.Manosdedios.org/donations/html) for "ANGELITA" by February 5th. **NEEDS: material for making clown costumes: 2 yard minimum of each: stripes, bright colors, polka dot. 1/2 inch elastic, zig zag, ribbon, wigs and eyes.**

Spring 2008 Build a homes. Have one small home funded! **NEEDS:** construction workers and additional funding! Date TBA.

Additional needs:

- reliable, economical car or 4 cylinder pick up for Pastor Alfonso (El Diamante)
- baby formula
- men's pants (size 32 and larger) and shoes/boots for migrant workers in asparagus camps
- projector for use with laptop to show JESUS DVD in pueblos and migrant camps

Thank you for your support and prayers!

Dennis and Lucy Smith, Manos de Dios

email us! GetInvolved@ManosdeDios.org

call us! 520-975-7356

What a blessing in December!

Thanks to our generous donors, the following were taken to & distributed in Sonora, Mx

December 1st trip: For **El Diamante:** 2 bicycles, 20 blankets, 3 bags of children's winter clothes, 2 bags of girls winter clothes, 3 bags of women's winter clothes, \$200.00 worth of food for the food bank, lunch and educational supplies for the participants of the Pastors conference.

For **Peñasco Pastors** (to distribute): 1 bag and 1 trunk of men's winter clothing, 1 large bag of men's shoes, 4 boxes of women's personal items, 80 towels. For the prison medical clinic: 2 boxes of diabetes medicine and test stripe, 1 diabetes monitor, 4 boxes of vitamins, 2 bottles of ibuprofen, 6 tubes of cortisone cream.

December 12th trip. Posada and Bible study programs.

I'm glad I have a trailer...another full load to Mexico!

To feed the 450 people at the prison Christmas Posada we purchased in Tucson (and had donated) the following: 12 turkeys (total of 250 pounds, Mexican donation), 70 pies (donated Pantano Christian Church, The Rock Church of Sahuarita members and others), 5 cans of whipping cream, 6 gallons of mayo, 9 gallons of peanut oil, 6 pounds of coffee (with the creamer and sugar), 50 pounds of macaroni noodles, 20 gallons of lemonade mix and 1,000 forks. Manos de Dios purchased in Peñasco: the paper plates - napkins - coffee cups - paper cups, potatoes, celery, lettuce and three large piñatas. The refried beans were cooked and donated by the women from local churches in Mexico.

We also donated to the **local medical clinic** 80 hospital gowns and two boxes of exam gloves.

The following was given to **local pastors** to bless the people in the community as needed:

30 baby blankets, 25 shoe box gifts (from the children of Pantano Christian Church Sunday school), 1 large bag of new baby clothes, 1 bag of men's and 3 bags of women's winter clothes, 2 large bags of teddy bears (collected by Beth Ann from PCC), 1 large bag of hand made stuffed animals, 1 case of copy paper, 1 large bag of men's shoes. We also gave a gift box of food, school supplies and small toys to two families (one in Peñasco and one in Nayarit) we personally know and that are in need.

Donations to the prison, prison clinic and men in the prison Bible study program consisted of: 6 pair of glasses, 500 tooth brushes, 50 tubes of toothpaste, 92 razors, 92 pair of socks, 50 Manos de Dios drinking cups, and 32 washcloth bags containing toiletries. Lucy also gave to the women prisoners, two suitcases of clothing, 12 gift bags and personal items during the bible study visit.

Our 2008 prayer for you and for our friends in Mexico "For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." Ephesians 3:14-21

In Christ's service,

Dennis and Lucy Smith

Manos de Dios

...encouraging pastors, prisoners and families in the barrios of Sonora, Mexico

www.ManosdeDios.org

getinvolved@ManosdeDios.org

