



... 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

March 2009 Newsletter

This Newsletter includes...

- *Building a home for Pastor Ruben in Desemboque, Sonora*
- *Partnering with a team from Kansas*
- *Worshiping in local churches*
- *Praise reports, prayer requests, and future plans*

The team that built a house in Desemboque

When missionaries accept an unknown 'short term work team' to partner with, the chances for problems are multiplied. (Even teams from their own home church can be difficult sometimes.) The team from Medicine Lodge United Methodist Church (in Kansas)



"We spent five days *Blessing and being Blessed* in Desemboque, Sonora."

contacted us last fall (we had met them once, two years ago). They stated that they had read our web site and saw we worked in outlying and remote areas. They asked us to prayerfully consider allowing them to partner with us to build a home in such an area. After praying about it, we became partners and discerned that a house would be built for Pastor Ruben in Desemboque, Sonora, Mexico. Pastor Ruben, Lucy and I had been praying for 2 years for the special team that would be needed to build this house. And that prayer was answered by the team from Kansas.

When we met this team on Saturday evening for the first time, it was as if we were all long lost friends. We bonded immediately! I will not go into the particulars of the house build because that is not what is important about this trip. Two things were important. One, Pastor Ruben is a hard working servant of the Lord. He works in the olive fields harvesting crops and is a harvester for the Lord as pastor of his church, Iglesia Amistad Cristiana. Even though his formal education is somewhat limited, he makes up for it by being a dedicated, hardworking and wise employee and servant for the Lord. He has been patient in all his endeavors and is well deserving of this blessing (And this opinion has been backed up by comments from people in the community). Pastor Ruben, wife Erika and children Caleb Ruben and Yamiletzi are moving from their one room (and all sleeping in one bed) living quarters to a new, two bedroom home. This blessing is very difficult to put into words.



Pastor Ruben, Pastora Erika and their children, Yamiletzi and Caleb Ruben

The second important feature of this mission trip was the spirit of unity as we served our Lord. The serving part is easy for many people on mission trips. We all want to serve, have gifts and talents we want to share with others, and have the desire to get our hands dirty and our feet dusty for the Lord. Unity, on the other hand, is a little harder. Lucy and I knew only a small amount about the people of Medicine Lodge



United Methodist church team paints new home

and they knew a little about Manos de Dios from reading our web site. Oh, and we did talk on the phone! But, did we really know each other, would we be compatible to work together for six days and would our religious background be compatible?

To deal with those concerns and thoughts, we did what all Christ followers should do. We prayed about the questions and asked God to put the right team together or close the doors and have someone

else build the home. Following His lead, we came together and built the house while bonding in unity, faith, determination and service. I can honestly say I have never seen a more Christ centered, focused and dedicated team.



Construction leader, Dick, teaches youth, Megan, to use electric saw

At the end of the first day's work I said to one of the leaders "what do you guys put in the water?" "What are you talking about?" was the reply. "Your team, they work together so well. The college students treat the 8th graders like equals and with respect. Everyone works hard, they listen to instructions without complaining, there are no slackers, they love Jesus and they respect their elders. You guys must be putting something in the water to get them to act like this." The answer to my questions was smiles on all their faces.

In reality I knew the answer, I was just making light of ethics we all need to follow and many of us have forgotten. First and foremost, for us Christ followers, is the ethic (commandments) Jesus teaches us to ***love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind and love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39).*** From standing back and watching this group I could see that they had got it right. The parents and the parent's parents of the people of this group from Medicine Lodge, Kansas had instilled and followed that commandment and passed it on to their children. In addition to that, they taught them a strong work ethic, responsibility, dedication to a task, the value of asking questions and the joy and satisfaction of working with others in unity. The devotions in the morning and prayer and reflection at night had 100% participation. To say I was impressed was an understatement. I wanted some of that water to bring to Arizona and all over the country and even the world. The reality is I can have it at any time. It is the living water that only Jesus can offer. We can all have it, but we must



Team adds awning to home to provide shade for Erika's washing machine

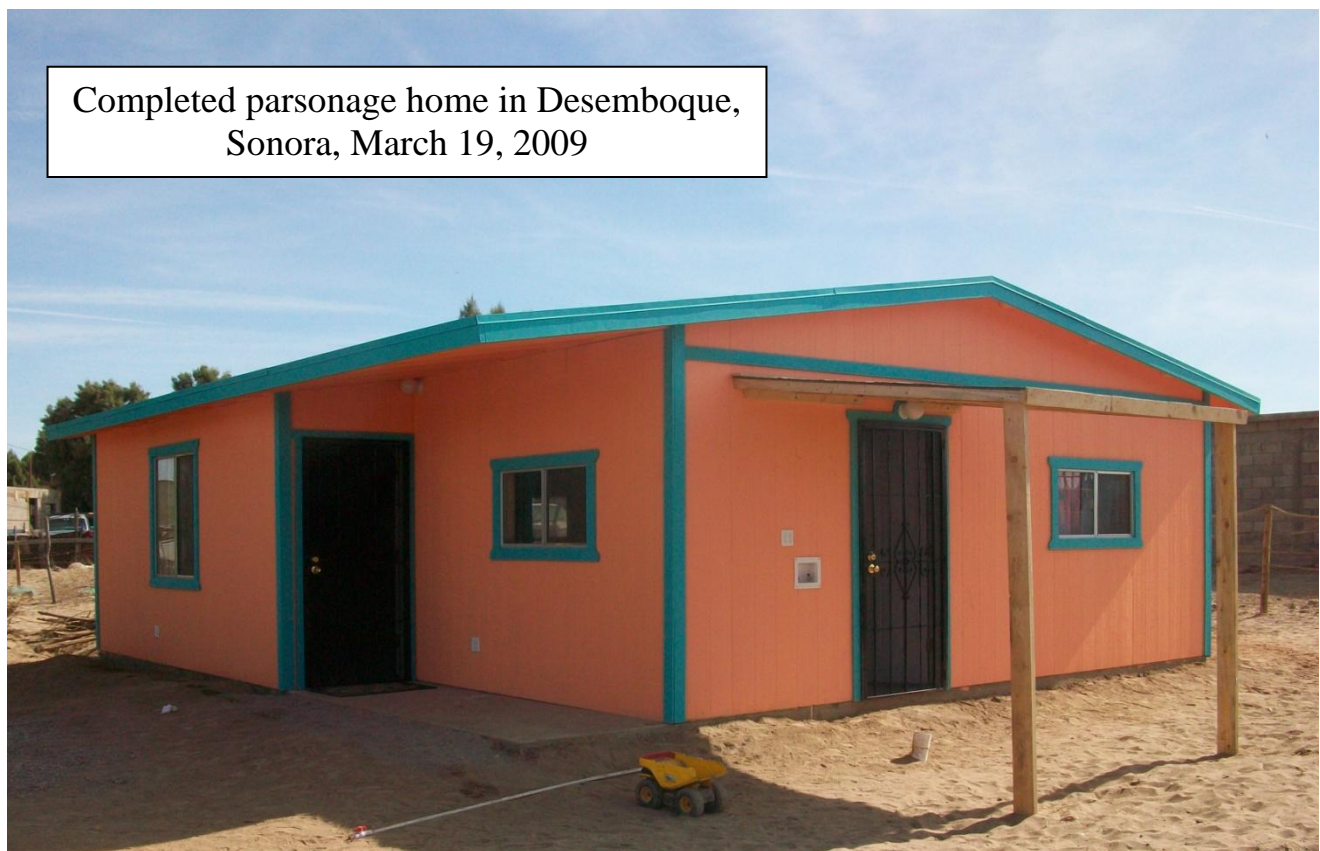
allow Him to fill our cup and then we must decide to drink it or not. That is our choice.

Lucy and I pray that we will have the opportunity to work with the United Methodist Church of Medicine Lodge team again in the future. And we look forward to working with other teams and learning and growing as we serve. To the teams out there that may be struggling a little with unity, compatibility, or any distraction that may keep you from being the team God wants you to be, I offer this advice.

Surrender yourself to the Lord and His calling, be dedicated to the mission He has called you to do, remember it is His project not yours, and most importantly be Christ centered in all you do. I learned a lot from this mission trip and I pray that I will continue to learn from every trip and with whomever I serve.

Dios te bendiga, His servant and student,

Dennis Dennis@ManosdeDios.org



More blessings from the trip to Desemboque...

When the Medicine Lodge team said they wanted to do something 'outside of the box', little did we all realize what this entire trip would entail! We asked Pastora Erika if she would prepare the food for the team if we purchased and brought everything to Desemboque (except, of course the fresh seafood and

*Manos de Dios y La Iglesia
Metodista
de Medicine Lodge, Kansas a
Desemboque, Sonora, MX
para construir una casa por
los pastores de la iglesia
Amistad Cristiana.
14-19 de marzo 2009*

Menú

sábado el 14 de marzo

La cena: Pollo asado (en ilumina),
papas, aspa ragús, jalapeños asados,
tortillas

domingo el 15 de marzo

(Desayuno en el hotel)

La comida: Tacos de pescado, arroz,
verduras: lechuga, pico de gallo,
cilantro, pepinos

La cena después del servicio en la
iglesia: Carne Asada, frijoles enteros,
repollo, guacamole, tortillas.

lunes el 16 de marzo

El desayuno: Hot cakes, miel,
mantequilla, salchicha, fruta (melón y
piña).

La cena: Manta con verduras,
tomates, arroz, tortillas

martes el 17 de marzo

El desayuno: Huevos y aspa ragús,
tocino, salsa, papas, tortillas

La cena: Hamburguesas con queso,
salchichas, chilis y legumbres,
papitas, jalapeños asados, guacamole

miércoles el 18 de marzo

El desayuno: Hot cakes, miel,
mantequilla, tocino fruta.

La cena: Caldo de Res, repollo, arroz,
tortillas

jueves el 19 de marzo

El desayuno: Huevos, salchicha,
frijoles refritos, tortillas

*Todos los desayunos incluidos juego
de naranja y café. Cereal y avena
serán disponibles.*

*Todas las cenas incluyen refrescos,
café, y postre (prepare arroz con
leche o flan, o tendremos galletas).*

El equipo de Medicine Lodge
proveerá las comidas y botanas de
lunes a jueves.

asparagus). She agreed and I assumed this would mean Erika and women from the church would fix the food. This was to be one of the many lessons I learned on this trip.

To start this process of providing the meals for the work trip, Missionary Gerry and I met to put together a menu we thought the Kansas team would enjoy and one that Erika would feel comfortable preparing. We opted for a mostly Mexican menu, as the Kansas team said they wanted the full experience of eating in Desemboque! Erika and I discussed the menu and we determined what ingredients were needed for her to prepare each meal. Then, Gerry and I figured out the quantities needed for each meal and where to purchase each food item (Costco in Tucson or local stores in Peñasco: the meat store, the fresh fruit and vegetable markets and the local grocery store.) Next we visited each store to price the items and determine the total needed to feed the team for the 5 day work trip. (This involved translating the food list into Spanish and kilograms! I also translated the menu into Spanish for Erika. See Menu in side bar.) The church in Medicine Lodge, Kansas put the needed funds in the Manos de Dios Bank of America bank account and I started shopping! (The Kansas team offered to provide the sandwich and lunch makings, paper goods, children's outreach snacks and s'more makings. What a help this turned out to be. Thank you!) We added the food we purchased at Costco to our utility trailer and truck, which were already nearly full of building supplies and we headed for the border. We pulled over at the border to declare the items we were 'importing' into Mexico. Armed with our receipts, I headed to the Aduna's office in Sonoyta. To our delight we found our friend and brother in Christ, Edmundo, working that day. He helped us through the process of filling out the needed paper work and made sure we paid a fair import fee for the supplies. Thank you, Lord!

I continued my shopping in Peñasco. It was then that we determined from talking with Edmundo that it would be wise to cross the Aduna's check point south of Peñasco a day before we had planned to (with our load of building supplies and food). So we traveled to Desemboque a day before our team was to arrive. This turned out to be a blessing. I had time to go over the menu with Erika again and show her most of the food we were providing (it filled her tiny kitchen and a small travel trailer, too!). Dennis and I left our utility trailer at the church and returned to Peñasco. The next morning, I bought the fresh food and we loaded our truck full one more time and returned to Desemboque. We arrived only an hour before the team of 21 from Kansas and our two Manos de Dios team members (Paul and Vicki from Benson, AZ) pulled into Desemboque.

When it was time for dinner, a few of us arrived at the church (and outdoor kitchen). We expected dinner to be started...or at least the fire to be lit for the chicken. Nothing was started. It was then that I realized...we would be involved

in the preparation of every breakfast and every dinner, plus clean up after each meal. The first meals were a challenge as we struggled through the language barrier and not knowing how Erika prepared food. But after a few tries we learned to send a team at least an hour before each meal to prep and cook. I was so grateful that Dennis had thought to pack a portable propane grill and I had packed my large electric skillet. Both were used constantly.

We prepared meals for 40 people twice a day with a team of women and youth that understood and spoke very little Spanish. I was kept busy translating, but soon they had their

communication worked out without me! I know that this team of cooks and cleanup crews discovered so much about the Mexican culture through this experience of food preparation. And it was such a blessing to work with some of the local women. By the end of the week we felt that we had a feel for 'life' in Desemboque. Thank you, Lord, for this experience of living life along side your precious servants in Desemboque.

Lucy Lucy@ManosdeDios.org



Vicki, Eva, DeDe & Erika prepare meals together in outdoor kitchen

Outreach for children, Women's wellness discussion, prayer walking, and showing of "The Jesus film"...

Long before the trip, we all prayed that during our five days in Desemboque we would have the opportunity to show Jesus' love to the community members. We planned 'evangelical' events and also listened to the Spirit to direct us. We shared conversation and a caring attitude each time we had the opportunity to interact with community members as we walked to and from the hotel, church, little store and beach. The outreach team shared God's story through games, crafts, drama and song at our Tuesday afternoon Children's Outreach. Many of the team dressed as clowns. We all were impacted by how much the Mexican kids are drawn to and in awe of clowns! We shared the gospel message with the paper plane story (ask Lucy or Bob, the Medicine Lodge team leader, to show you this cool paper plane dialog) and with the beaded bracelet. (See the January 2009 newsletter for details.) DeDe (assisted by Ery, a



Back row: Lucy (with Carly), Cindy, Casey, Savannah (with Chopper) and Vicki
Front row: Brooke, Erica Addie and local boy...ready for children's outreach program

translator who drove over from Peñasco for the day to help out) led a discussion with the local women about women's health issues. She had good response and was able to give out some desirable 'take home' information packets (in Spanish, of course.) We spent an afternoon walking through the community praying blessings over the people living in each of homes. When we had the opportunity we offered to pray with adults and children. Many of our small groups came back with powerful stories of how 'God showed up' as they simply opened the door (through prayer) and invited Gods' light into the people's lives! Another God-happening: Some of the team, after noticing that the church building was without a sign indicating the name of the church, offered to paint the name on the church. Pastors Ruben and Erika liked the idea and requested that they include 'an ascending dove'. The 'artistic youth' soon were painting the name 'Iglesia Amistad Cristiana' on the front of the church. They added a beautiful dove and listed the weekly service times.



Brooke & Erica add church name to front of building

That evening we set up a projector & laptop (provided by the Kansas team), sound system and chairs in front of the church. Erika and their praise band (along with a couple folks from the Medicine Lodge Team) played and sang Praise and Worship songs in Spanish. Erika prayed boldly and invited all in the community to come watch a 'life changing movie'. As the movie, The Jesus Film, began to be shown on the front, outside wall of the church, people gathered on the street. They leaned on vehicles, sat on chairs or stood to watch the entire 2 hour movie. During the entire movie I kept looking in amazement at the front wall of the church. Everyone was watching the movie...and right above it was the newly painted 'Iglesia Amistad Cristiana' and the church service times. It made such a visible impact. I couldn't stop

thanking the Lord for His perfect timing of placing it on those young people's hearts to paint the sign that day...immediately before The Jesus Film was shown on that same wall! (FYI, a local couple and some youth came up to talk with Pastor Ruben after the film. Yeah!) We would love to have a projector (an item now on our 'needs list') to show Christian movies regularly in this manner. "Movie Night" in Desemboque was a unique happening and many were interested!

For more information about "The Jesus Film" go to

www.JesusFilm.org



The Jesus Film being shown on the front of the church in Desemboque

"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"
Isaiah 52:7

Greetings and Blessings! My wife Dede and I just had the opportunity to make the trip to Desemboque with the Methodist Church from Medicine Lodge, Kansas. As we were preparing for our trip, we offered up the simple prayer, "make us servants Lord, we just want to go and be a help to all around us."

At some point, the Holy Spirit began to nudge me to take my twelve string guitar down with me and be prepared to leave it there. I wondered how I could possibly meet a guitar player in Desemboque needing an instrument, but I knew to trust the Lord as He would make it obvious. So it should be no surprise that He did exactly that and introduced us to Antonia, a wonderful Spirit-filled guitar player and singer who was thrilled to receive this blessing. I marvel at the family of God, and He who provides so faithfully and knows the desires of our hearts. Borders and languages are no obstacle for God!

Joe Taverner joe@tavtech.com

When we all gathered inside the church after breakfast on Thursday morning (our last day in Desemboque) we heard the story of the 12 string guitar being given to Antonia. Antonia spontaneously shared from her heart blessings for the group and the pastors of her church there in Desemboque. She then played (on the gifted guitar) and sang a beautiful worship song. We were all moved as we worshiped our God and thanked Him for this wonderful week of fellowship. We then moved inside the new house for the "house dedication ceremony".



Joe and Antonia

...Antonia leading the group in Praise and Worship of our Wonderful Lord!



To watch Antonia praying and singing click on the video on the newsletter page of our website:

<http://www.manosdedios.org/newsletters.html>

To view more photos from Desemboque click on this link to Dennis' facebook page:

[Desemboque House Build Trip photos](#)

Donation of motor home to a young family

There are lots of things going on in ministry, praise the Lord! Lucy and I returned to Peñasco on Thursday afternoon from the house build in Desemboque. We unpacked, visited with our precious friends Margarita and Alejendra, and relaxed a little. Friday Bob and Arnelle (friends and supporters of Manos de Dios from Tucson) were coming to Peñasco to deliver a motor home they were donating to be used as a home for a needy family. Lucy and I had done a lot of praying and discerned that God was directing us to choose Miguel and Leo and their two year old daughter, Karla, as recipients of this blessing. Leo and his friends cleared the property and dug a large septic hole in preparation for the arrival of the motor home. The delivery and set up of the home on wheels could have been a problem if



Pastora Rafa, Leo, Miguel, Pastor Lupe, Dennis and Bob place plywood in the sand before the motor home is positioned.

Bob had not put a lot of pre-planning. He avoided getting that motor home stuck in *a giant sandbox* by bringing along precut boards to put under the wheels. He also had level blocks, spray lubricant, a chain to secure the newly purchased water tank (thanks to another family's generous donation!) and a lot of extra items the new family would need!

Delivery and set up went 'without a

hitch' and the new owners were very excited. Lucy and I visited them a few days later and saw that Miguel had already obtained wood to build a storage building on their property. He planned to build an awning over the motor home to protect it from the sun. Leo and Karla were happy being in their own home and didn't seem to mind being far from town.

What a wonderful story of another family that is blessed by servants living out Jesus' call to bless others as we have been blessed.



Bob, Arnelle, Leo, Karla and Miguel

"...remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

Acts 20:35b

Worshiping on Sundays in Mexico

Part One: Sunday Lucy and I decided not to worship at the church we normally attend, Peñasco Christian Fellowship. There, we have lots of friends and people that call us family.

Some even speak English (great for me) and it

is the place where we attend leadership classes. We have built a home with this church, participated in outreach programs with them, and even went on a mission trip with them in January. This church has become comfortable and more like home every time we attend. However, God convicted Lucy that we need to visit the other churches we work with and support and I agreed.

So Sunday morning we attended Pastor Lupe's church, El Sembrador (literally translated the 'sower of the seed'). It is a financially poor church but they are rich in passion and dedication to our Lord. The 40 people (mostly women and small children) made a joyful noise as they sang their hearts out accompanied by the pastor on his guitar.



Nancy snuggles on Dennis while he prays in church service.

As they passed around the collection plate I could see and hear the small coins that were being given and remembered the Bible story of the woman that could only give 'pennies'. A few of the worshipers were dressed in ragged and dirty clothes, but they were in church and worshiping. I wondered how many of us would go to church dirty and in ragged clothes.

I love children and they seem to know it! In a very short time kids are always around, no matter where we go. This morning we had a family of three kids all over us (one in each lap and the other one hanging on our arms). They were playing, hugging and clapping to the

music. The smiles on their faces and the joy in their eyes made me forget the odor from their unclean bodies and clothes and the very runny noses that I knew I would have to deal with later. And yes, I did get their cold Tuesday afternoon and am on medication as I write this. Lucy, as usual, is not as sick as I am. I'm going to have a talk with Jesus about that when the time comes! ☺

On Monday we were able to give Pastor Lupe donations of clothing, shoes and bedding for his parishioners. Pastor Lupe is an example of making the best with what you have. Please pray for Pastor Lupe, his family and their church, El Sembrador in Puerto Peñasco, Sonora, Mexico.

Part two: Sunday evening we decided to go to an evening worship service at Iglesia Emaus with Pastor Carlos Adame. Physically, this church was totally different than this morning's experience. The building did not need repair, was painted nicely and all the furnishings were in excellent condition. Sound system and instruments were all in good working order and the parishioners were all clean and neatly dressed. And when collection was taken, I did not see or hear one coin. But each church had one very important thing in common: enthusiastic worship. There were hands in the air praising God, tears, singing, dancing, joyful noises and a spirit of hope. Pastor Carlos gave a powerful message about opening our eyes to God's direction in our lives. The pastor concluded the service by playing the guitar and singing, "Abre mis ojos" (Open the eyes of my heart). (We love it that so many pastors in Mexico sing and play the guitar, often as a part of their teaching!) We joined most of the worshipers at the front of the church to pray together, asking to hear God's voice more and see the world with His eyes.

During the time to greet each other we were pleasantly surprised to see familiar faces. Sitting behind us were Carlos and Nadi (with their two small children). In February we had met them when a church group from Phoenix was building an Amor house for them in the 'invasion' area. Lucy loves to stop in and visit during house builds and often helps with the communication between the building team (English) and the family (Spanish). After the worship service, Lucy spontaneously asked, "Do you need a ride home?" "Si, por favor" (Yes, please) was the response. We went outside the church to find that they had ridden bicycles with their children on the handlebars from way out in the invasion neighborhood! It was dark and we could not imagine them riding all that way home at 8pm at night! We loaded the bicycles in our truck and drove them home. It was 1.5 miles from the church to where the pavement ends and another 2.5 miles to their house over a very bumpy, sandy, and dark road! They do this every Sunday night. What a demonstration of and a testimony to the strength of their faith.

As we dropped them off, at their house that is without electricity or running water, Lucy asked them how they were doing. The reply was that things are very difficult as Carlos has not been able to find a job for months.



Nadi, Carlos, Dennis, with children Esmeralda and Carlos

The only food we could see was a tomato and an onion. I knew we would be bringing some groceries to them tomorrow...I could see 'that look' in Lucy's eyes. They also mentioned that a member from the church in Phoenix that built their house said they may have a car for them. But, they had no way to communicate with them to see if the car was still available and when it would be brought to Peñasco. Another opportunity for us to serve was unfolding.

Well, when we got home Lucy was on the phone calling Phoenix to find out about the car. The church family was so grateful to have someone to translate for them and to communicate with Carlos and Nadi! There is a vehicle available. The group NOW plans to donate it to Manos de Dios and we will be driving it to Peñasco this spring to give to Carlos and his family! Praise the Lord! I could not help but reflect on what blessings had come from going to church that evening! We were drawn into the presence of God with our brothers and sisters in Christ, re-committed to opening our eyes and ears to God's plan for our lives, and were re-connected with a family with needs. We are so blessed to be used by God to bless this family and the church in Phoenix. I am glad God has a plan and allows us to help. It makes our day!

Peace and blessings,

Dennis



Carlos and Nadi's 'Amor' home (located in the 'invasion' area, Puerto Peñasco) built by church group from Phoenix

Lucy's box...

I'm currently listening to Marcela Gandara's praise and worship music. I especially love "Dame tus Ojos" (Give me your eyes). This goes along with the cry of my heart to see the world with God's eyes and to hear His voice more clearly. I am always looking for music to encourage the women in the prison. They will love this! (Thank you to Gerry for giving this CD to me!)

Reading Praying God's Word, Breaking Free from Spiritual Strongholds by Beth Moore. The women's prison ministry team is reading this book (available in Spanish, too!) and we are discussing it at our prayer meetings. Powerful! "Thank you, Lord for all you are teaching me."

Lucy@ManosdeDios.org

Manos de Dios' Praises and Prayer Requests:

- We praise you, Lord for who you are, our Creator God, worthy of Praise. At this time of year, we are especially aware of the indescribable gift of sending your only son, Jesus Christ, to die for us.
- We pray for transformation of our hearts, minds and lives as we seek to love you with all our heart, soul, and mind.
- We pray for transformation of the church, your bride, that she would love you with an all consuming passion.
- Guide us, Manos de Dios, in how to best under-gird the local pastors and churches for evangelism of their communities.
- Help us all to put into action a plan for discipleship of new and growing believers.
- We pray for transformation of the prison in Puerto Peñasco. Praise you that two guards have accepted you as Lord and Savior. Continue to invade that prison with your love and the power of your Holy Spirit!
- Thank you for the many individuals and three churches that partner with Manos de Dios as we do God's work in Mexico. Bless our supporters for their generosity, O Lord.
- We pray for our missionary friends around the state of Sonora that dedicate their lives to serving our Lord. Pat & Gerry -Puerto Peñasco; Rich & Lila- Puerto Peñasco; Heidi & Conrad-Huachinera; Patricia-Guaymas; Dwight & Kristi-Huatabampo. Lord, please grant them wisdom, blessings and joy.

Future Plans:

April

- Improvements on "Campo Animo" (our missionary outpost in El Diamante). Put in water tank and pipes; connect trailer to water and septic; install 220v electric pole and wires; plus more.
- Transport donated vehicle to Carlos and his family in Peñasco
- Assist (under gird) Iglesia Metodista Libre (Pastor Manuel Lopez) with Dia de los Niños (Day of the Child) celebration April 25 (morning)
- Attend Sunday School and Vacation Bible School teachers conference lead by Pastors Angelita and Alfonso at Compañerismo Cristiano de Puerto Peñasco April 25 (afternoon)

May

- Participate in the second annual "*Marcha para Jesus*" in Peñasco (joining with other Christians as they parade through the main streets with banners and floats giving Glory to God) Saturday, May 16
- Construct addition to office of Esperanza Women's Rehab Center in Peñasco
- Transport children's play ground equipment to El Sembrador church in Peñasco (to be installed for use at VBS in July) (to be donated by group from Tucson)

In April and May Lucy will be attending Spanish classes with teacher, Roberto, at Recursos (www.recursosmexico.com) in Peñasco

Manos de Dios encourages and equips 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