



... 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

This Newsletter includes...

July 2009 Newsletter

- *Our trip to Kansas and Texas to share about God's work in Sonora, Mexico*
- *A time of refreshing and encouragement*
- *(is a very different missions newsletter)*



Lucy learns about the state flower, the Sunflower, and corn fields in Kansas

July 2009 Fund raising/Supporters visit in Kansas

As we left for our first fund raising/visiting supporters trip, we realized that going to the Midwest would involve heat, humidity, thunderstorms and tornados. Let's face it we would be in 'OZ' territory! We prayed for safe travel, blessed fellowship with everyone we encountered, patience with and for each other and new supporters, if it was God's will.

And... we were blessed! We only had three hours of rain in two weeks, no thunderstorms or tornados, we got along well as a couple, and we made many new friends and met new potential Manos de Dios supporters. We had a wonderful opportunity to visit two communities in Kansas that are filled with the Spirit of the Lord, Hugoton and Medicine Lodge. These two communities are small in number (1,800 and 1,300 respectively) but are giants in their Love of the Lord, service to Him and their community, and the desire to bring their children up in a community where the adults live their faith by their actions. They love their children while teaching them respect, responsibility and a positive and honest work ethic. Don't get me wrong, they do have their problems, arguments and struggle with the same obstacles all of us face. They even have "cave people" in their community. (Cave people are people that just cause problems for the sake of it. If everyone agrees on something, cave people disagree simply for the principle of it!) But, they try to work with their problems in a Christian way.

Representatives from these two communities came down to build the house for Pastor Rubén in Desemboque, Sonora with us last March. It was this group that I questioned about 'putting something in their water', because the young people ask the adults for advice, listen to it and then put that advice into action. What a concept! (See the Manos de Dios March 2009 newsletter)

I remember the scripture where Jesus tells his disciples to go out into the world to spread the word and don't take anything with you (meaning 'you will be taken care of') (Dennis' paraphrase). Lucy and I had that experience those two and a half weeks. We went out into the world (Kansas and Texas) to spread the word (to share the mission God has placed on our hearts) and were taken care of. We were accepted, loved, fed (and I gained 8 pounds), housed and cared for in a manner that was a blessing from our Lord. We were with family, Christ's family and our brothers and sisters.

While visiting with our friends in Kansas we were reminded of who we are (children of God), how to act (as servants), how to love unconditionally, and to follow God's principles no matter where we are.

For the Kindgom, Dennis

Hugoton, Kansas: Corn fields, sunflowers, cattle and FRIENDS!

Lucy and I were invited to come to Hugoton, Kansas by Richard. He was the construction foreman on the March build trip to Desemboque with the team from Medicine Lodge, Kansas. He had said to us while in Desemboque, "Come on up to Kansas and speak at our church. We love to have visitors." So we did! Driving from Tucson toward the end of July, we stopped in Albuquerque for the night and then arrived in Hugoton Saturday afternoon. Richard had arranged for us to stay in a great Bed and Breakfast, Shady Lane, owned by his good friend, Neil. (It even had a pool for Lucy to exercise in!) After we settled into a cute room, Richard came over and we picked up right where we had left off in Mexico, with the 'family-type' relationship we had developed at the house build project in Desemboque. I had known Richard for all of six days in March and it was like I visiting my brother (although, a younger brother, I need to admit!)



Richard, Connee, Dennis & Lucy

Hugoton is a small town of about 1800 people. What they lack in size, they make up for in kindness, friendliness, positive attitudes and Christian work ethics. The town was clean, well laid out and had a combination of different types of businesses that all related to one another in some way or supported the community in general. The schools were spacious and growing to meet the young population.

When we arrived we needed to 'move around' (after sitting in the van for two days) so we went to pick up Richard's wife, Connee, and then went to the church and checked out the sound system and projector. I was to share a message the next day at their Sunday morning worship service about our mission work in Northern Mexico. We met some of the church family and everything checked out. We were then ready to eat! Being new in town, we let Richard pick where we were going to eat and we wound up at a nice MEXICAN restaurant. I said Mexican! Where's the beef, mashed potatoes and corn

on the cob? It seems the best mid-west style restaurant is only open on Sundays after church so I had to wait until then. It was an all-you-can-eat style place, so that made me feel a little better. Sunday's church service went well and the people made us feel right at home. The church gave us a wonderful love offering and committed to pray for Manos de Dios. And after church we did go out to eat to the "Pig Trough" and I had my fill of beef, mashed potatoes, corn and all the fixings.



Richard, Connee, Lucy, Dennis & (visiting) Pastor Gary

Richards's family has a family farm and it is run by three of the four brothers. Richard is the only smart brother that has a real job (as jokingly stated by his older brother) as wood shop teacher. But, he is not just a teacher. He has a business building custom homes and does remodeling. He also coached basketball, served on the school board, and is active in the community and in his church, Hugoton Baptist Church. And in his spare time he fellowships with his friends and family, helping many with projects around their homes. Speaking of family, all his brothers and most of the people we met did not simply have a job. They have a job, and then they go to school board meetings, community meetings, serve as coaches, spend time with their children and are involved at their church! I thought, "When do these people sleep?"



Richard's brother, Steve, shows us how they farm in Kansas!

I will not go into detail because it would take pages of commentary to explain, but I have a new found respect for farmers and ranchers after spending time in Kansas with them. In the area there were thousands and thousands of acres of corn, wheat, hay and who knows what else. These fields had to be taken care of; i.e. watered, fertilized, watched over, given vitamins and sprayed for bugs when needed. (Farmers and ranchers, please forgive my less than formal descriptions of farming activities.) The fields had to be watered by walkers (a watering device) that could stretch out for a half mile on each side. Then, there were the computers that ran everything, workers that had to watch out for malfunctions on all this equipment, and water pumps that had to be kept in perfect pumping condition. Not to mention the mass fleet of combines, sprayer trucks and all sorts of trucks and equipment that are needed to either keep things running, harvest the crops or deliver crops wherever they were supposed to go. After the harvest (and everybody helps with the harvest) it's time to 'kick back' until spring. Yea right! Tell that to the

people that do all the maintenance on the equipment, trucks, tractors (millions of dollars worth), out buildings, and the list could go on and on.

I'm from the south and I can remember my uncle's mules and plow, the few hundred acres he had, and the joy of working a small farm. In today's generation, farming is BIG business and your entire season of work and crops can be wiped out in a matter of minutes. Being there and seeing the fields and the process it takes to farm and then realizing that it could all be wiped out in a matter of minutes by a tornado, hail storm or days of torrential rain, left me with a pit in my stomach and a new prayer for farmers and what they go through!

Then, there are the ranchers that raise the cows and pigs and the feed lots that fatten them up and send them to market. They work just as hard (but maybe without as much equipment). We had the opportunity to visit a feed lot for cattle and boy was that an experience for the eyes and nose (we were down wind for some of the tour!)

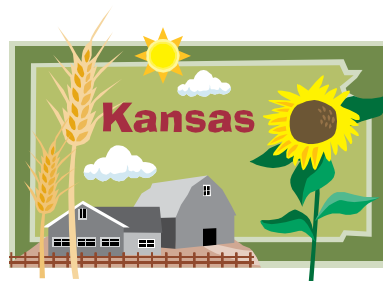
The feed lot we visited was managed by a brother-in-Christ from Richards's church. He graciously took time to show us around. This guy was not only the manager of this feed lot (and until that day, he ran another feed lot a few miles away), he was active in the community, in the local schools, and in his church. Like I said, no one simply works one job! For those of you who like stats, here's some details we learned. All of the feed for the cows come from local farms. The rain and urine mixes with the manure and runs off into catch ponds. They use this water to fertilize the corn. The leftover manure is picked up by a front end loader and put in large piles. It is then picked up by fertilizer companies that buy it for processing and sale to the public. When the cattle are



delivered to the feed lot from a rancher, they are checked for diseases, vaccinated, (quarantined, if necessary), tagged and weighed. (I know I am forgetting many things.)

They normally run about 125,000 head of cattle through this lot every year. The day we were there they had delivered 23,000 head of fattened cows to the slaughter house, which is located a one hour drive away. Their semi trailers, loaded with 36 cows each, deliver the cows to the feed lots. I don't know how many semis they own and run, but this took 639 trips to deliver the 23,000 head! I am still in shock by the numbers.

We enjoyed meeting the young pastor, Shane and his wife. Richard's family and Neil treated us to a bar-b-q/swim party at the Bed and Breakfast. Lucy took an 'after-dark' bike ride with some of the young women and they talked about the things women have in common all over the world.



We were treated to a demonstration of hunting dog training by another brother-in-Christ from the church, Clint (who is also the High School Football coach).

Richard took much time off from his construction business that week to show us around the community (in addition to the corn fields and feed lots). We spent precious time with him and loved getting to know his wife, Connee (as she had not come to Mexico)! Hugoton is located in a beautiful



area of Kansas, with little rolling hills and so much green even my good eye started to hurt! And Lucy even got to practice her Spanish! There were five or six Mexican restaurants in town (all operated by Mexicans) and the high school population is 60% Hispanic. Also, many Mexican people worked in the service industry and on the area farms (including the hog farms).

It is a beautiful town with friendly, hard working, generous people and many love the Lord! We loved every minute of being there.

Thank you Richard and Connee for treating us like part of your family and for inviting us to come back to Hugoton! Looking forward to seeing you next year on your mission trip to Mexico and next summer in Kansas. ☺

Dennis dennis@Manosdedios.org

Medicine Lodge, Kansas: Picturesque ranches, God's country, precious brothers and sisters in Christ, gracious hospitality!

We were having such a wonderful time, that it was hard to leave Hugoton so we decided to stay one more day. More visiting people in the community and a chance to go to another great Mexican restaurant, in Kansas of all places!

However, the next morning we said goodbye to our gracious hosts and drove the three hours to Medicine Lodge to see the rest of our 'newly found' family. We arrived at lunch time (naturally) and met many of the group from the house building trip at the one and only Pizza Hut for lunch. Did you know that Pizza Hut started in Kansas and they have at least one in every town?

As we visited with everyone, it seemed like we were all talking at once. It was like a family reunion. The young people were telling me about school starting up soon, bringing in the summer's harvest and how long the work hours are on the farms. And can you believe that they

actually trust a college girl to drive a huge combine and a high school girl to follow behind catching the corn in another truck? What is this world coming to? ☺ I might add that the boys don't seem to mind that the girls are working, too. On the other hand, we adults had to mention our aches and pains (I have a lot of them). I was, and still am, impressed by the Kansas youth and their maturity, work ethic, respect for their elders and service to the Lord. It had not changed from the last time we saw them. What a blessing! Besides growing good crops, Kansas raises a great crop of kids. My hat is off to the hard working people in Kansas.

Phil and M'Lou, co-leaders of the mission trip, showed us around town (took about 10 minutes ☺) and then took us to their family ranch house about 15 miles out of town. Phil and M'Lou now live in town, but he drives out to the ranch every day to work with his cattle and is remodeling the old ranch house. When he had offered us the house to stay in (down in Mexico) he was apologetic because there was not a refrigerator, the outside needed painting, and there were no neighbors. Apologize? We were looking forward to spending some relaxing time alone in God's country! When we arrived we saw that we would have everything we needed: plenty of food and water, a comfortable bed, a BIG front and back yard to sit and relax in, and wildlife (including wild turkey, deer, buzzards, raccoons, possums, an owl and barn swallows) stopping by to visit us from time to time. And I forgot to mention, no cell phone or internet service! We also had the use of two ATV's to explore the countryside.



Phil and M'Lou's family ranch house (circa 1929)



As in Hugoton, we were made to feel welcome by everyone we met. We spoke at the church service on Sunday morning about our mission activities in Mexico and were warmly received. They also presented us with a generous love offering to help us financially. After the service a young boy about 12 years old came up to us with his grandmother. He handed us an envelope. It contained change he had been saving up to donate to

Manos de Dios to help the poor in Mexico. It was all he had. His generosity reminded me of the story of the lady in scripture that donated two pennies, also all she had, and how generous that offering was. I am happy to say that his donation purchased 2 cases of spiral notebooks for the school children in Puerto Peñasco.

While in Medicine Lodge we were invited to homes for dinner and restaurants, taken on trips around the community, introduced to the pastor of the Medicine Lodge United Methodist Church (where we spoke) and had wonderful times of fellowship. We renewed our

friendship with trip co-leaders Bob and Cindy and enjoyed the time they took out of their schedule to show us around this community that they love. Bob took us to visit one of “The Ted Turner” ranches and we got ‘up close and personal’ with a herd of buffalo. (As personal as you can get from the truck!) You see, one of the ranch hands came by and gave us some



**M’Lou and Phil welcome Dennis and Lucy to
Medicine Lodge United Methodist Church**



advice, which we took. “Don’t get out of the truck! The cows (female buffalo) are in season and the bulls (male buffalo) are anxious.” Since the bulls were taller than the truck, we stayed inside and took pictures from there. We also visited a wind farm (modern wind mills that have blades that are 150 feet in length generating electricity) and learned about Gyp mining and oil wells. We had lunch in an old saloon in an almost ghost town (with

great burgers☺). Thrown in with all that activity was time to be still and listen. We treasured our time sitting in the back yard praying, reading scripture, talking, meditating and just enjoy the silence and beauty of this part of the world our Lord has created. It was wonderful!



Enjoying Sunday afternoon ‘on the ranch’ with friends Cindy & Bob, and Joe & DeDe and their daughter.

Sunday afternoon we had a reunion with Joe and Dede (also from the house build trip. Remember the guitar for Antonia story? See Manos de Dios March 2009 newsletter.) and Bob and Cindy out at the ranch house. We enjoyed memories from the Desemboque trip, discussed future mission trips, shared life experiences, and prayed & sang together.

When we were getting ready to leave Medicine Lodge, Dale, the church pastor, approached us with a guitar case. We had already learned that he was a musician and owned ‘a few’ guitars. He wanted to send a guitar for someone who needed one in Mexico. He had prayed, asking God which guitar he should give. The answer came to him loud and clear, “your favorite one, of course’. So, we were being given a beautiful classical guitar made in part from 300 year old wood. The case was sturdy and ready for travel. We snapped a photo of Pastor Dale with his guitar gift and promised to pray about who was to receive it. Thank you for your generous gift!



Pastor Dale with his ‘favorite guitar’...his heartfelt gift to a fellow musician in Mexico.

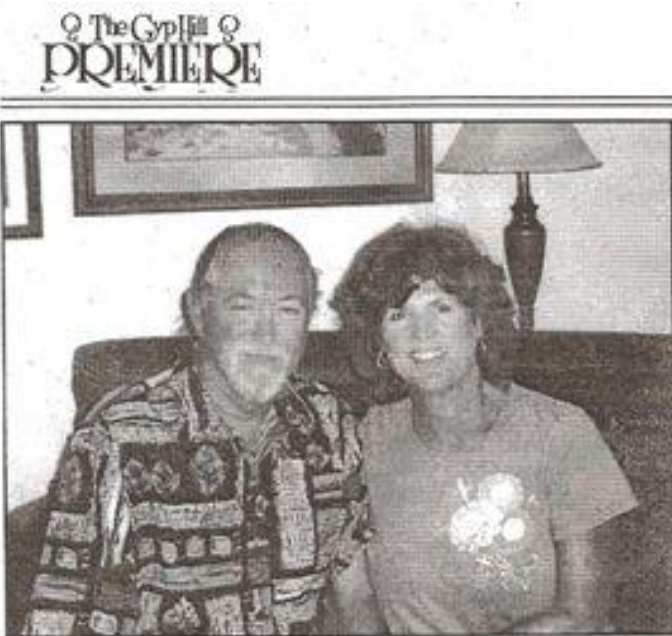
These two Kansas towns had allowed us to spend time with our Christian family, learn about a part of our country we knew little of, rest and rejuvenate, reflect on what we had been doing in service to our Lord, and ponder where we may be going in the future.

The value we put on this trip is immeasurable! Lucy and I want to thank the people of Kansas, those we met that welcomed us, our new Christian family members in Hugoton and Medicine Lodge that fed and housed us like family, and the Lord for allowing us the opportunity to serve Him and serve side by side with so many of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our trip was truly a Christmas in July for us.

May the Lord bless you for your generosity to us,
Dennis and Lucy



Phil and M'Lou, our gracious hosts, prepare a true Kansas beef meal for Dennis in their home!



Lucy and Dennis Smith of Tucson, Arizona
**Smiths speak at UMC
about Mexico missions**

Manos de Dios, translated Hands of God, is the mission of Lucy and Dennis Smith of Tucson, Arizona.

Lucy and Dennis spoke at the United Methodist Church on Friday evening about their missions work and the truths about Mexico, including the economy and safety issues.

They are partners with and support churches, pastors and missionaries in Sonora; Puerto Penasco, Desemboque, Huachinera and El Diamante, Mexico. Their biggest mission is to encourage and equip pastors and families to share Jesus and to help the Mexican people to grasp God's full purpose. They build churches, homes and parsonages and assist in weekly prison ministries.

Lucy and Dennis encourage everyone to go to their web site and see what the ministry is doing; ManosdeDios.org.

"People have gone to our website and have been called to support in some way. They know God's principles; we are to give to the poor, they give to us and we pass it on," said Lucy.

Lucy and Dennis invite all to pray and partner with the mission to carry out God's vision in transforming Mexico.

"So this is my prayer: that your love will flourish and that you will not only love much but well. Learn to love appropriately. You need to use your head and test your feelings so that your love is sincere and intelligent, not sentimental gush. Live a lover's life, circumspect and exemplary, a life Jesus will be proud of: bountiful in fruits from the soul, making Jesus Christ attractive to all, getting everyone involved in the glory and praise of God."

Philippians 1:9-11 (The Message)

M'Lou arranged for an interview with a reporter from Medicine Lodge's local paper, 'The Gyp Hill Premier' while we were there! Above is the article that appeared!

Plano, Texas...The joy of meeting long time supporters!

The last leg of our trip was to stop in Plano Texas (just outside of Dallas) to visit Rich and Rosemary. This is an interesting story of blind faith.

I will start off by going back in time about two and half years. Manos de Dios received an envelope with a return address from someone in Plano, Texas. We did not know anyone in Plano and opened it with curiosity. The envelope contained a check with a note that read something like "I found your mission on the internet and read your web site. I like what you are doing and I am led to support your mission. I will be sending you a check for every month." We thought, "Wow, what a blessing! Someone we don't know is trusting us to be good stewards of their money and relying on our honesty to serve the poor as we say we will do." That is what we call blind faith. Rich has been a dedicated supporter ever since. Many months

ago we received a note from him (with a check) asking us to pray for him because there were cut backs and he had lost his job. Checks continued as usual. Twice there has been a large check for an odd amount. Rich believes in tithing from bonus and severance checks! Later, another note came from Rich saying you don't have to pray for a job for me anymore, God has provided one for me. Through good times and bad, Rich has been dedicated to his commitment of financial support to Manos de Dios. We have grown to know and love Rich as a brother and he has introduced Manos de Dios to his friend Rosemary and she has become a supporter of our mission,



Dennis, Rich and Lucy meet in Plano, Texas!

also. Rich and Rosemary have also prayed for us when we are going through tough times and have often written notes of encouragement. This is something all missionaries need! Occasionally we receive a box with the return address of Plano. It is filled with exactly what has been on our most recent 'needs list'.

Anyway, fast forward to May of 2009. We decided to take the trip to Kansas to speak at the churches in Hugoton and Medicine Lodge about mission trips and serving in Mexico. Immediately, we thought "we could stop in Plano and meet Rich!" Plans were made and a date was set. We would finally meet in person our dedicated supporters from Plano, Texas!

We arrived in Plano Tuesday evening and made plans to meet Rich and Rosemary at a Texas Steakhouse for dinner. (Eating comes so naturally and you can have great conversation across the table!) Even though we had never met personally, we talked easily over dinner, as if we

were long time friends. In fact, we do share many friends. Rich reads every word of our Manos de Dios newsletters and asked about many of the families we have written about.

“How is Margarita and Alejandra? Has Carlos found a job yet? Is their van running OK? How are pastors....?” Rich asked with true interest. We shared many of what we have common: hearts for serving the poor, helping others, and serving the same Lord, Jesus Christ! Rosemary shared stories about the fun they had shopping for items on our needs lists at the dollar store or Wal-Mart. They would fill the large box with the items picked out lovingly for people in Mexico and send it with a prayer to our Manos de Dios address.



Rosemary, Rich and Lucy...sisters and brother in Christ!

They treated us to a delicious dinner and we had become better friends by the time we left. They even took all the flyers and prayer cards we had left. They are ‘networkers’ and said they will pass them out to all the people they know and continue to tell others about God, Manos de Dios and what we are doing in Mexico. Isn’t it wonderful to have friends like that? We are truly blessed in so many ways. Thank you Lord!

Lucy and I traveled together, enjoying great conversations, making plans, talking about things we previously had not had time for and being away from all the distractions we have when we are at home in Tucson or Mexico (cell phones - internet - city noise – TV). We benefited from extended “God time”, without the pulls of a busy schedule.

Another and more important thing we were reminded of was our mission. Not just the mission of Dennis and Lucy or the mission of Manos de Dios; the mission of all Christ followers. It is that we are all in Christ together, serving the same God, on the same level and we all follow His principles laid out for us in His Word (the Bible). All of us have gifts and we are to use them to bring Him glory and not slight anyone else’s gifts. We are a team, His team, and are to work together to accomplish His goals. We should not try to do it alone. We need to and are required to enlist the help of others as we serve Him. And, a very important point is to help others accomplish what God has called them to do. We are to help others succeed in whatever God has placed on their hearts.

As for Manos de Dios, we truly believe that. We can’t accomplish the goals God has set for us by ourselves. We are just one piece of the puzzle we are working on. We realize God has given us a mission and we need to enlist the help of others to accomplish that mission and be successful in His eyes. By doing this we bring glory to Him and so do all the people involved with us. And then those who support those who support us bring glory to Him and it goes on and on.

We are able to accomplish our mission because of many things. We pray that we will follow His lead, not where we desire to go. There are people that pray for us, volunteer to help us physically, give us much needed donations, and offer advice. We also have financial donors that give as little as a roll of nickels up to a check for a thousand dollars.

Another thing we firmly believe in is that all the support we receive is equally valuable. It is not the amount that is offered, it is the condition of the heart that is important. In His eyes all gifts are important if the giver's heart is in the right place.

Visiting Richard in Hugoton; Phil, M'Lou, Bob and Cindy along with all the other kids and adults from the Medicine Lodge team; and Rich and Rosemary in Plano were a wonderful reminder to Lucy and me. A reminder that we are not alone and not expected to do it all our selves. We consider our supporters part of our mission team. To accomplish the goals of the team we need everyone involved.

Jesus has provided us this team to work with. And when we all do our part, we accomplish the goal He has set for us. Our team is not about winning or losing, it's about serving the Lord. And because He directs our projects we are covered by His grace. And when we follow His plan He will judge us according to His will and purpose and it relieves us of worrying about the outcome (and boy am I glad I don't have that responsibility!)

Thank you to all our team! May the Lord encourage you with His Holy Spirit!
Dennis



We concluded our summer trip by spending 9 days with my brother, John and his wife, Elvira and niece, Priscilla (7) and nephew, Johncito (6) in The Woodlands, Texas (north of Houston). My Dad, John (82), flew over from Tucson to join us and then drove back with us. We spent precious time together...celebrating family time! I enjoyed reading the Children's Bible with the kids each morning and danced/sang with our Spanish children's outreach CD's. I always get lots of practice speaking Spanish when we are together. Elvira was born in Vera Cruz, Mexico and our whole Texas family is bilingual!
For the King and His Kingdom....Lucy

Manos de Dios

Spirit-led missions work

God will do His part....We will do our part!

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